

WALTER MELON

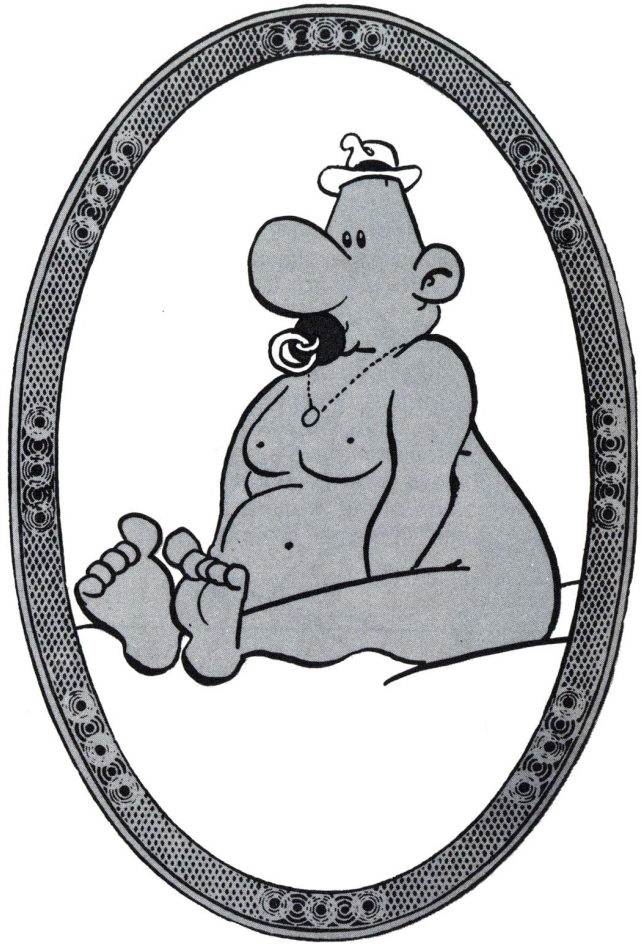
MAGNESIA'S TREASURE by **GREG.**



DARGAUD



A rare photo of Michael Greg, taken towards the end of a period of deep reflection prior to starting his monumental work on the History of the Melon Family, which the world was awaiting with bated breath...



The hero at the same age...

INTRODUCING WALTER MELON

or how to have a nervous breakdown in three easy stages

At 9 a.m. one fine spring morning (May 5 1931 to be precise) Mike Greg was born. Laughing. It is common knowledge that adults do not understand children. However - even though at the time Mike could not express himself with the extraordinary eloquence which was to single him out in future years - this was no excuse for not realizing that he was in fact vigorously calling for a pencil to put down for posterity the ridiculous face of the doctor who had just brought him into the world.

That face explains the laugh, but the fact that no pencil was forthcoming turned the laughter to tears. Nonetheless, everyone claimed that,

apart from being uncommonly beautiful (a cross he was to bear for the rest of his life), Mike Greg was perfectly normal.

As far as a genius can be considered normal, he probably was, as he is now obliged to admit. But he could not forget the doctor's face ; that bald-headed, big-nosed apparition was to haunt his dreams for years to come, a fact which calls for two comments :

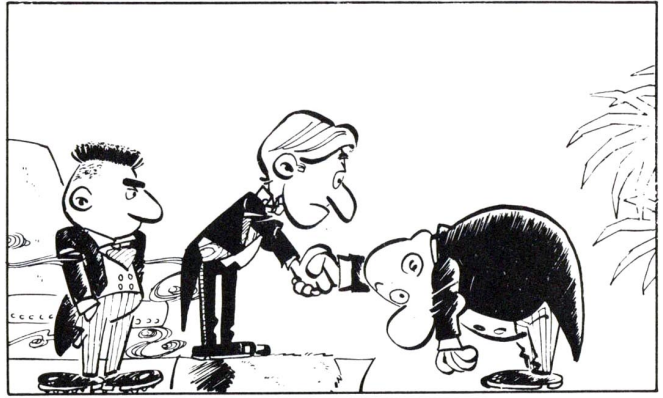
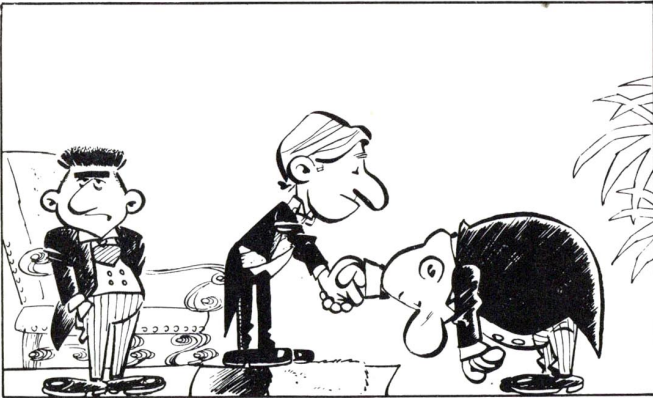
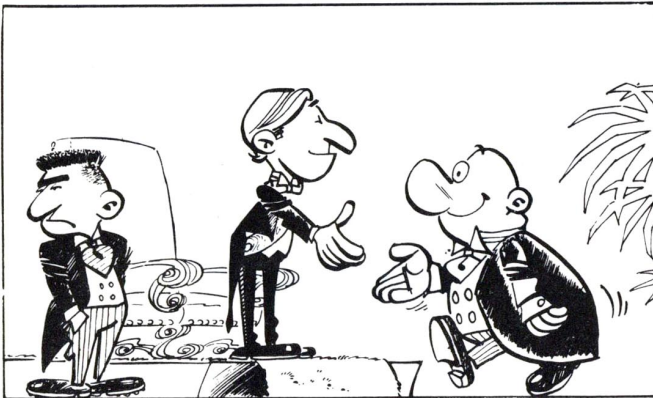
Firstly, a good doctor, even if he is as ugly as sin, has not completely fulfilled his duties by merely bringing an artist into the world ; in some way or another he must contribute to the future success of this life. After all, had the doctor in question been more pleasant to look at, the baby MIGHT have taken life seriously (and become some kind of average Nobel Prize winner, President or TV announcer) just to keep his mother happy. It is thus only fair that the doctor should have contributed to Mike Greg's dramatic struggle to reach the top by providing a model for the looks and the remarkable stupidity of which Walter Melon is so justly proud.

Secondly, it is clear that when you have the same nightmare every night, the best way to get rid of it is to share it with as many people as possible. With this in mind, at the age of 19, Mike Greg broke open his money-box, bought a gold pencil and a diamond typewriter, got married and started pretending to work ; thus his first hilarious comic strip was born, introducing a big-nosed, silly looking character who was not a doctor and whose name was not (yet) Walter Melon.

These early efforts are now purchased for phenomenal prices by wealthy collectors who keep the pages in their safe-deposit boxes most of the time ; however, the underprivileged masses still have a chance of admiring this priceless artwork once in a while when an exhibition of the greatest flops of the century opens in some remote corner of the world.

As these first steps in an (otherwise) glorious career were entered in red on the books of every European publisher, and as Mike Greg's photograph (framed) embellished the desk of every cashier in seven different countries, the time had come for the artist to take a second look at things, and to spend some months in meditation. Eighteen months, to be precise : the army took things in hand and shazam! transformed the comic strip artist into a lieutenant in the paratroops. This was to be the second (recorded) disastrous flop in Mike Greg's life and a somewhat difficult period for the army.

A civilian once more and father of two to boot, the creator, flying in the face of adversity, proudly decided at long last to answer the call of Destiny : he replied to the first ad he found in the morning paper, and found himself working in a Press Agency as a specialized repor-





ter and advisor for an automobile column that was syndicated in as many as two European newspapers, plus one other somewhere in the region of Sarawak, Borneo; and all this for twelve dollars and forty cents a month.

Six months later, once the Press Agency and the three newspapers had gone bankrupt, Mike Greg's drawing had improved to such an incredible extent that he was receiving more refusal slips than he submitted material. These presumably supernatural powers gave him the idea of writing science-fiction stories which in turn enabled him to rake in large amounts of money, since his seriously thought-out plots turned out to be the funniest literature to hit the market in years.

Eleven different artists - fourteen of whom are still his friends after all these years - asked him to script their illustrations in such varied fields as Westerns, thrillers and love stories. He provided them with such well-documented, meaningful or heart-rending scripts that his name on the title page of a book sent it straight to the top of the best-seller list.

A French Publisher, Georges Dargaud, had been observing this phenomenon closely and analysing it for some time. He came up with an offer : if Mike Greg would accept to draw just as he wrote, the contract was ready for signing, on one condition, however : that he should *never* try to be funny *on purpose*.

Greg heroically faced up to the challenge ; the deal was made and a star was born. Walter Melon, that superperfect, incredibly outstanding hero, came into being. As soon as

the first Melon adventure was published the entire planet shook with laughter - it was even reported that a few people in England smiled, too.

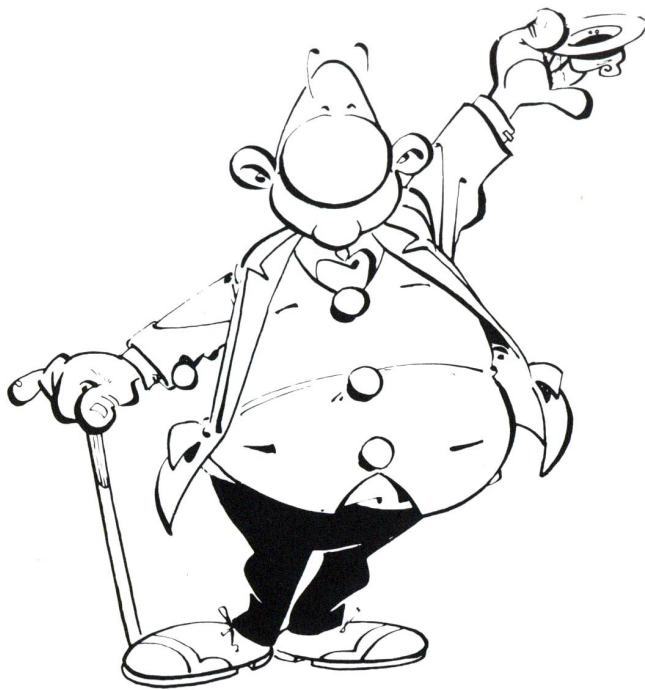
The Dargaud Publishing Company added two more stories to its building in Paris, France, and opened branches in 22 new countries, which Greg agreed never to visit, but where Walter Melon became an uncontested celebrity, known locally under several different names (but... a rose by any other name...) : ACHILLE TALON in France (a nauseating pun on Achilles'heel), ALBERT ENZIAN in Germany, OLIVIER BLUNDER in Holland, AUGUST JULIUS in Scandinavia, ALLA KALA in Iceland, to quote but a few.

It then came to Georges Dargaud's ear that it is very difficult to win a Pulitzer Prize if you are not known in the United States TOO. Hence...

Dear American Reader,

Uncle Melon needs YOU! Since at this moment you are drinking up these words, you have obviously been trapped into buying our first book. Watch out for the next one (yes, we'll keep on trying !), and prove to the world that a true American's heart - and his wallet - are always open and ready to help the genuine, honest, modest and sincere underdeveloped hero that I timidly recommend to you. I ask nothing for myself, since I have learned to exist, thanks to my inborn humility, in the shadow of the incorrigible Walter Melon.

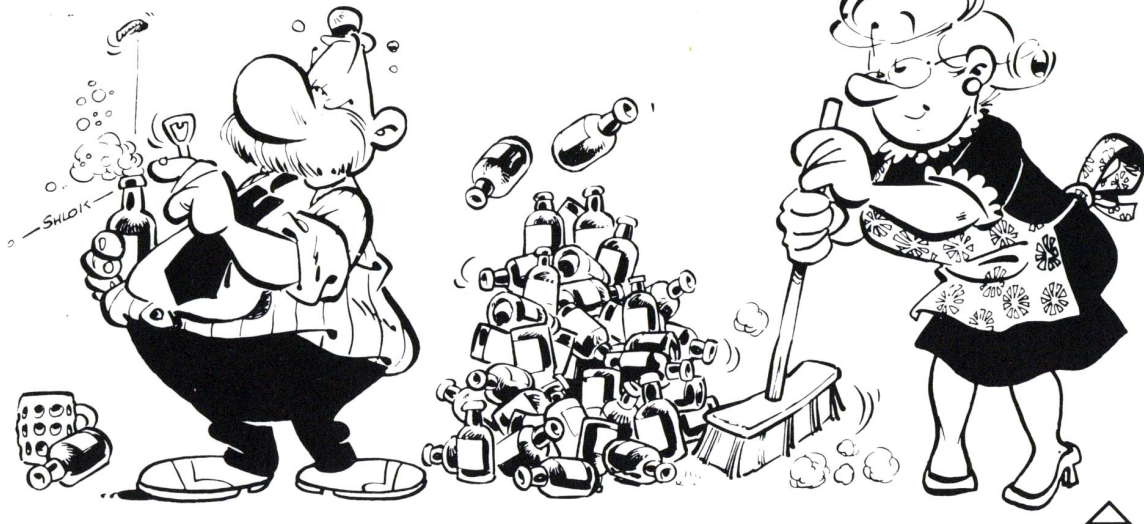
Mike Greg



TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THEM...

◀ **WALTER MELON**

The star of this strip, he was born to solve any conceivable problem and to conceive problems nobody else ever thought of. He is a walking encyclopaedia (second hand), but has never noticed that a few pages are missing. This information helps all those who try to follow his elucubrations, especially as the missing definitions can be found between "aberration" and "tolerability".



▲ **POP MELON**

A complete mystery. All we can reveal is that he has a son. Since then he has been drinking moderately (in his opinion), regularly emptying cans, bottles, barrels or pipe-lines of beer; he receives an important annuity from the museum he promised to leave his liver to when the time comes for him to meet the great Holy Brewer.

ERASTUS BITTERBUG

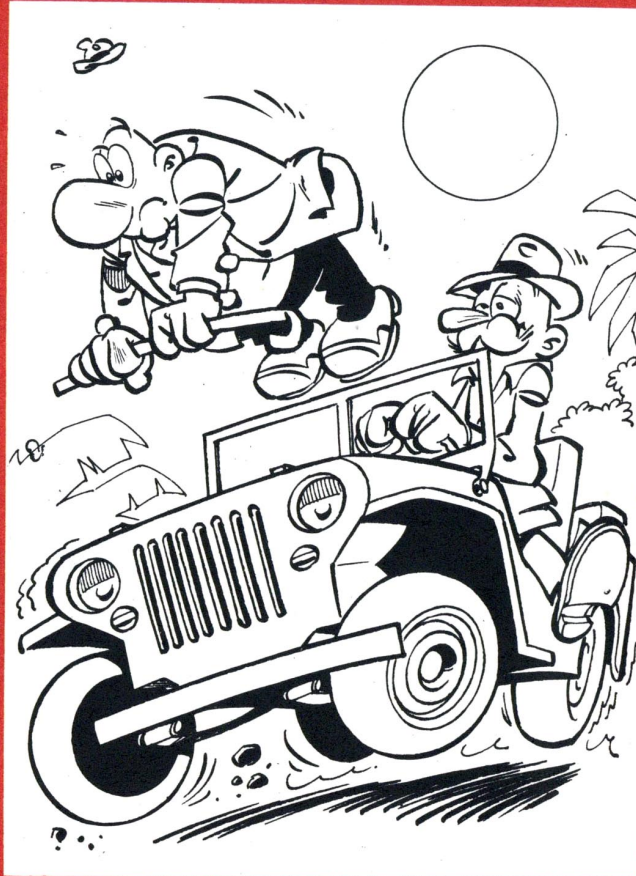
The Melon Family's best - in fact, only - neighbor. Whatever the subject, he NEVER agrees with Walter. In fact, the only times Walter hit the jackpot was when he applied Bitterbug's theories - in reverse. Bitterbug lives on a retirement pension since he quit his last job - impersonating Jesus Christ as a baby in live Christmas celebrations. ▶



MOM MELON

Was a demon on roller skates and a motor cycle champ before becoming a devoted mother. She never interferes with Walter's initiatives unless she disagrees... which does happen from time to time !

GREG



WALTER MELON

**MAGNESIA'S
TREASURE**

TRANSLATED BY PABLO VELA

DARGAUD CANADA Ltd
307 BENJAMIN-HUDON ST-LAURENT MONTREAL P.Q. H4N1J1

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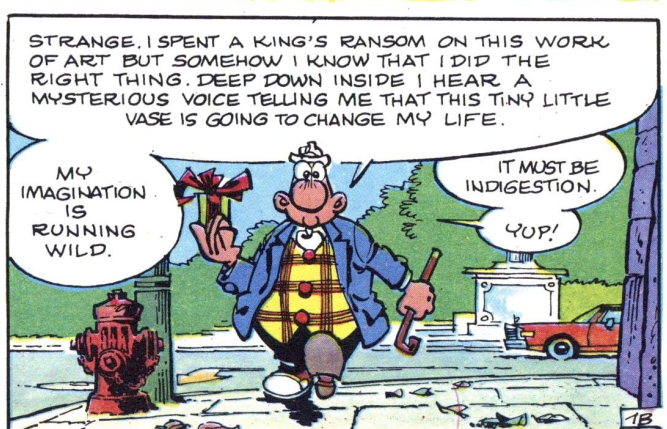
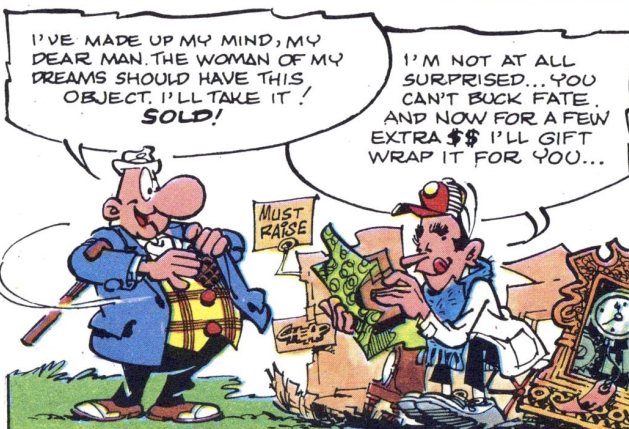
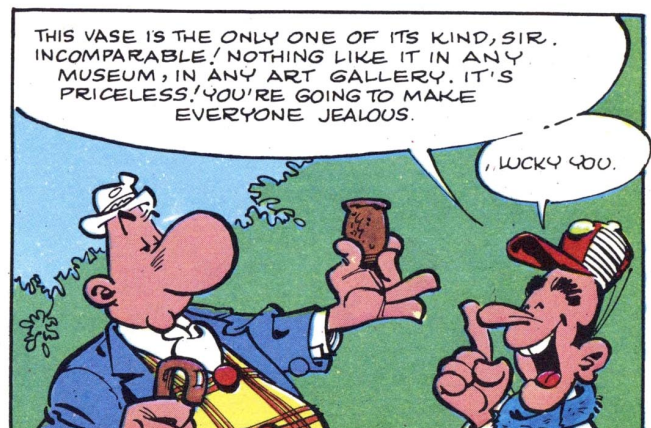
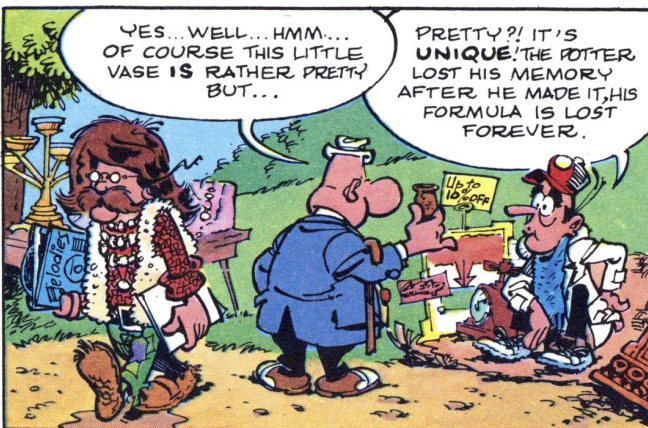
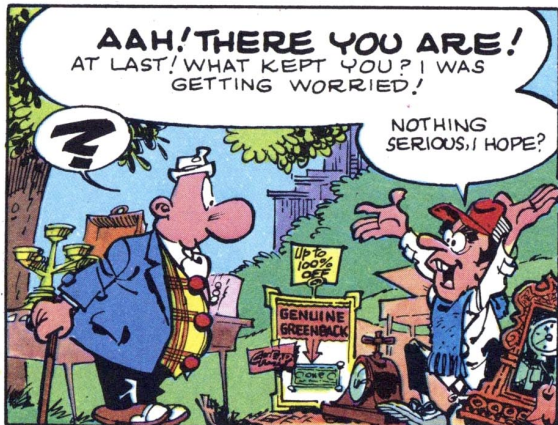
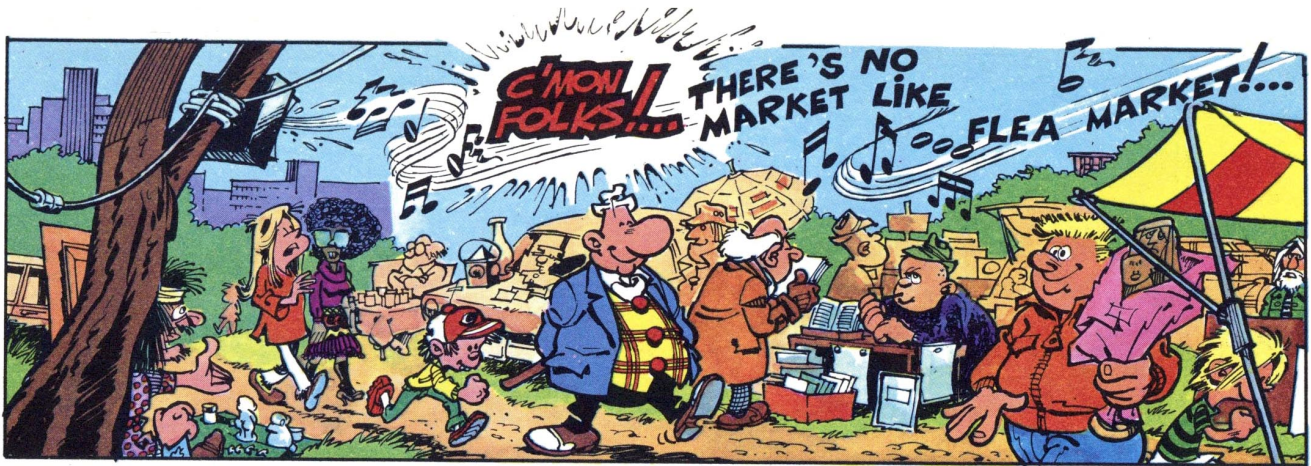
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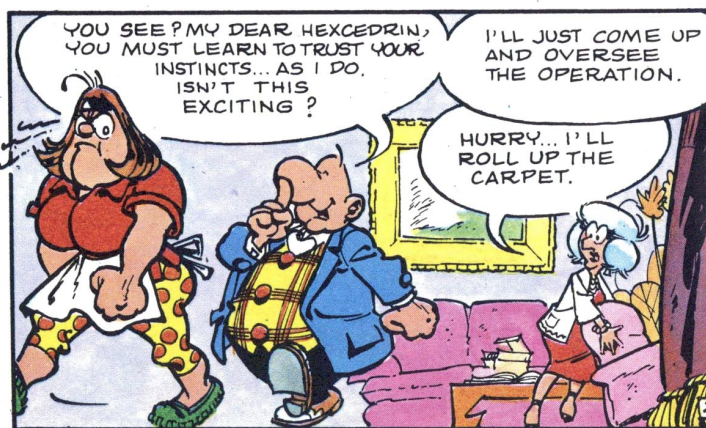
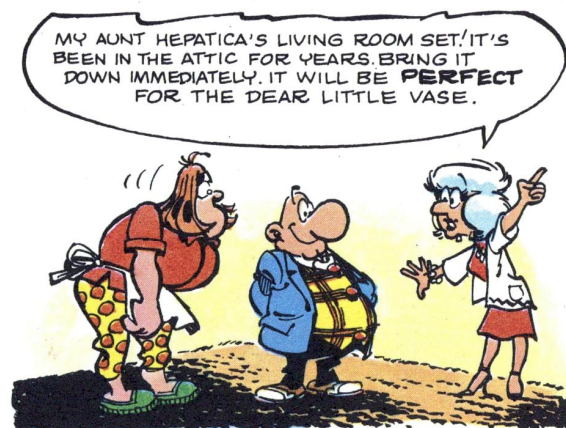
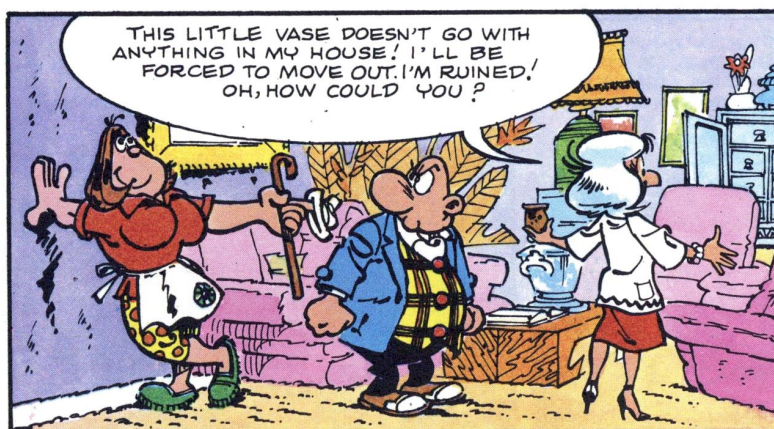
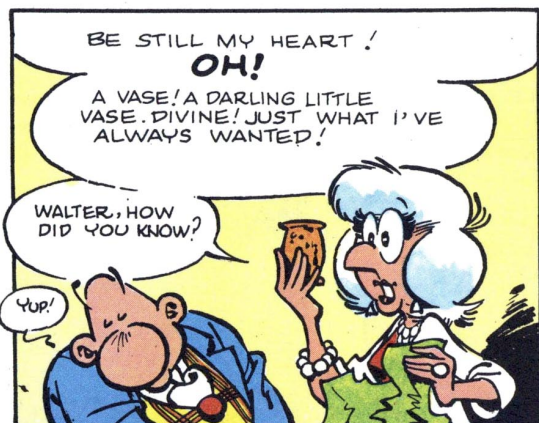
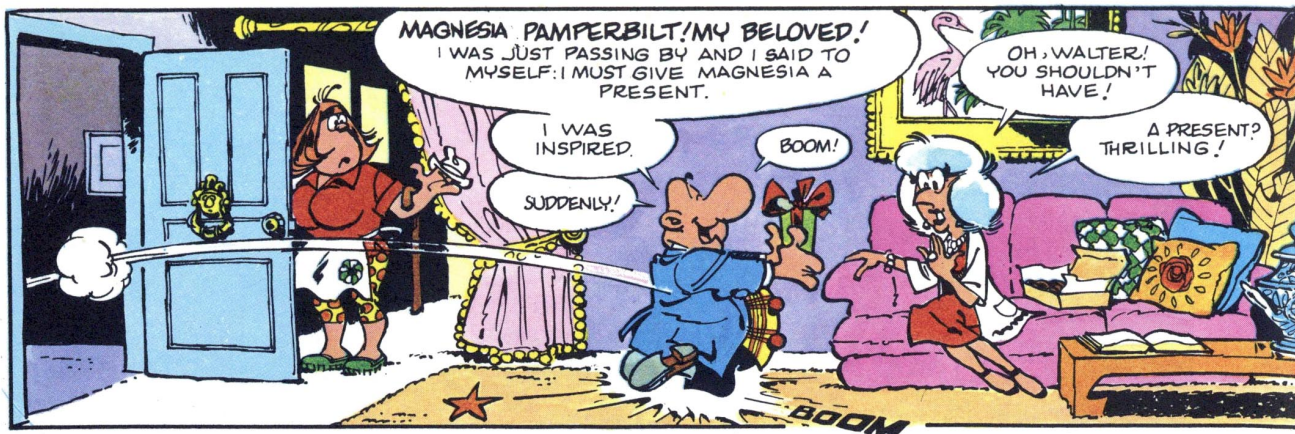
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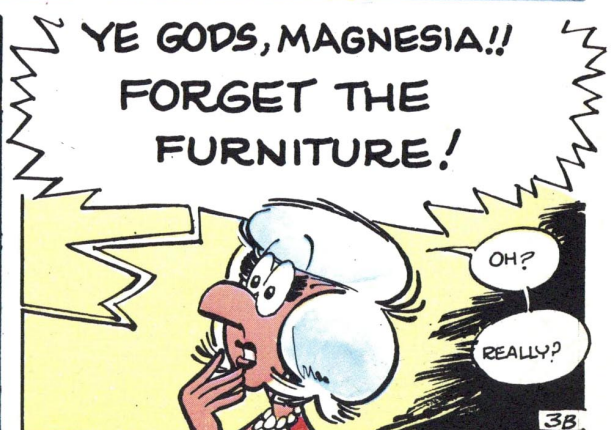
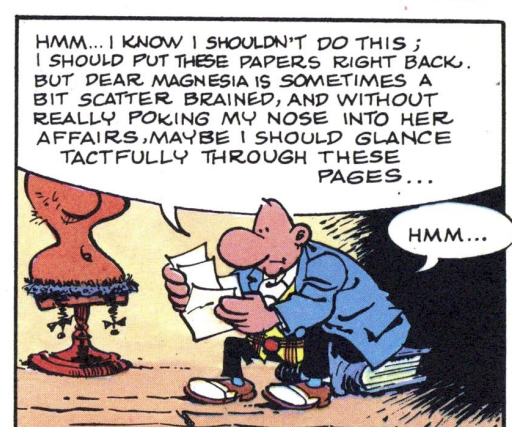
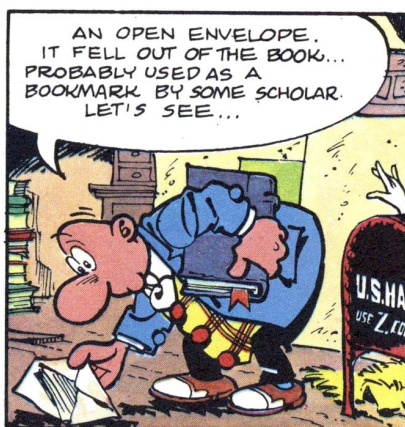
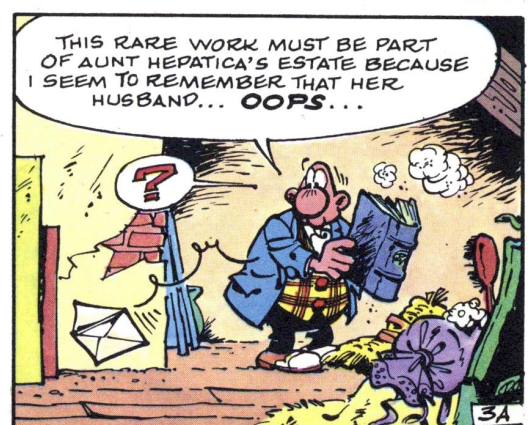
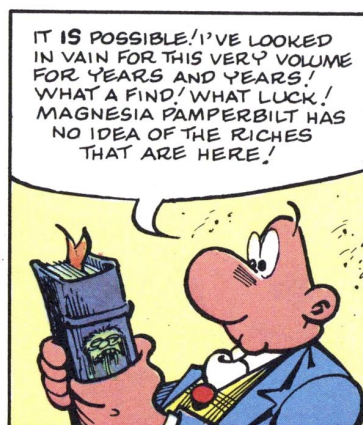
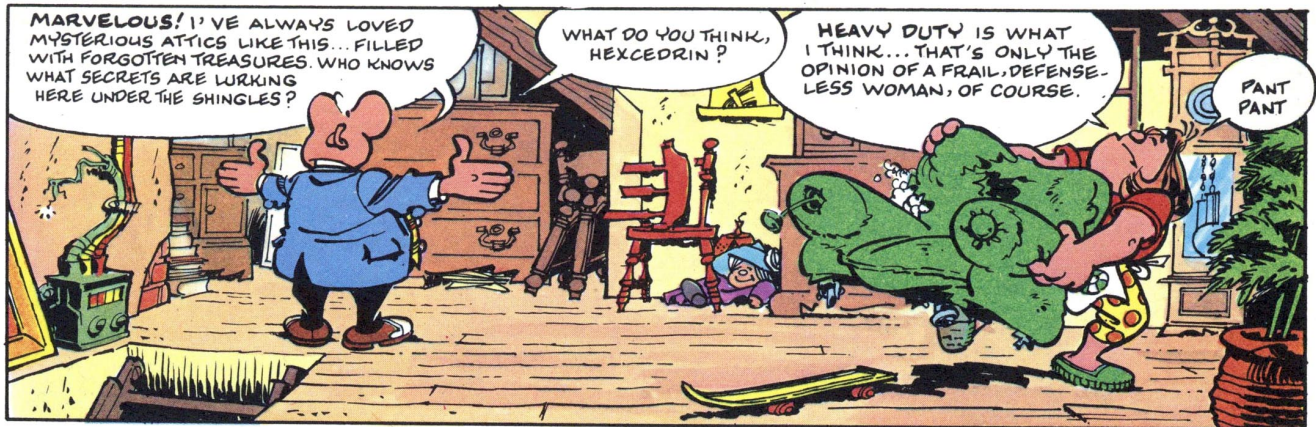
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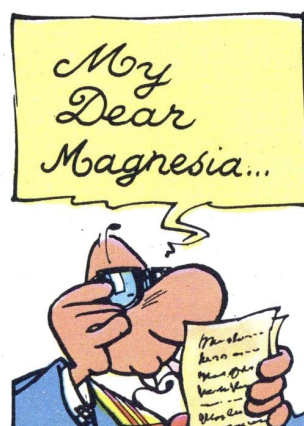
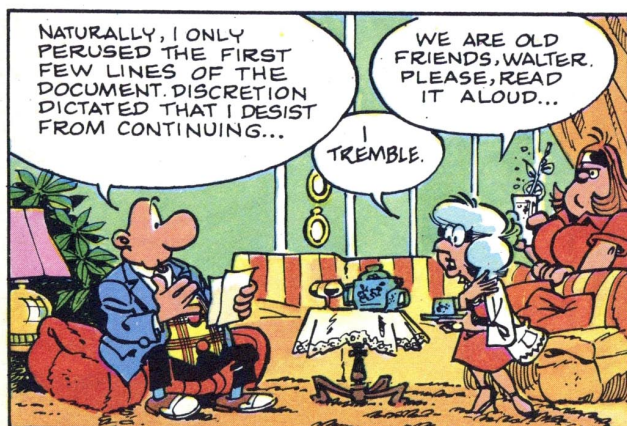
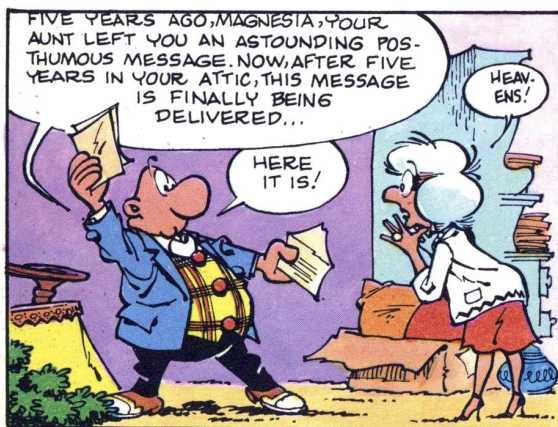
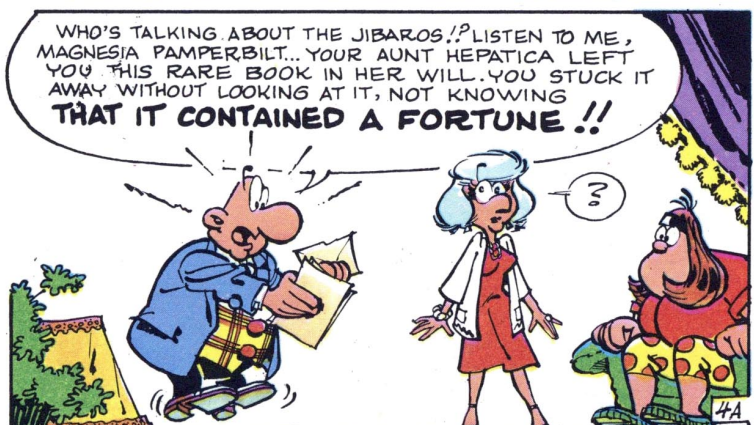
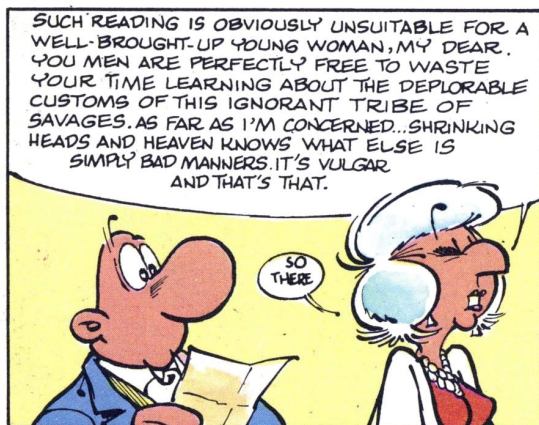
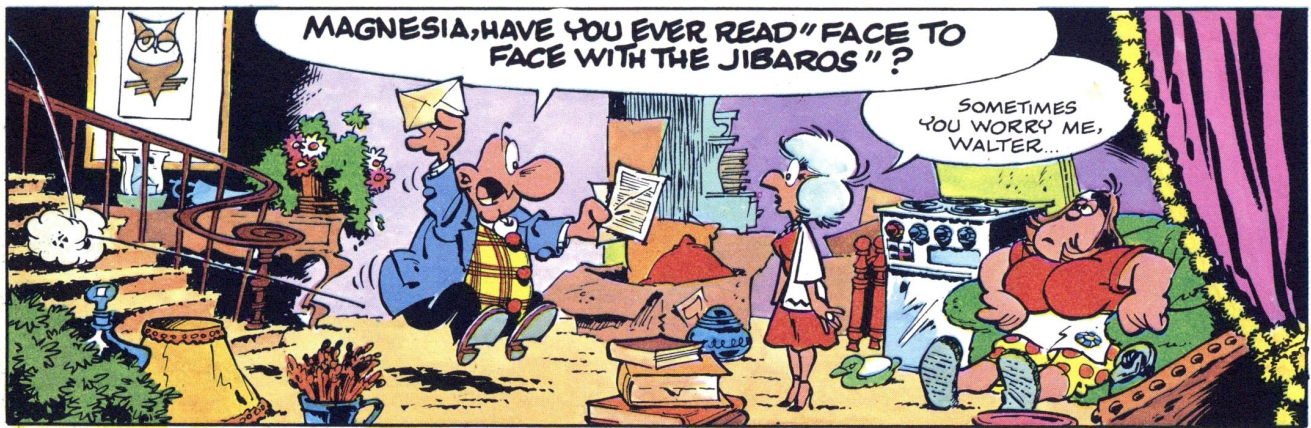
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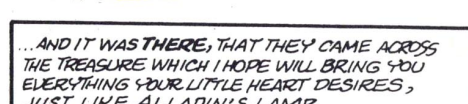
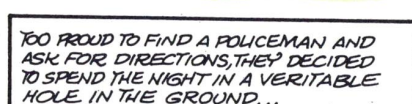
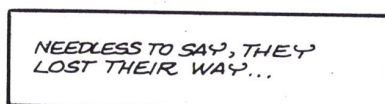
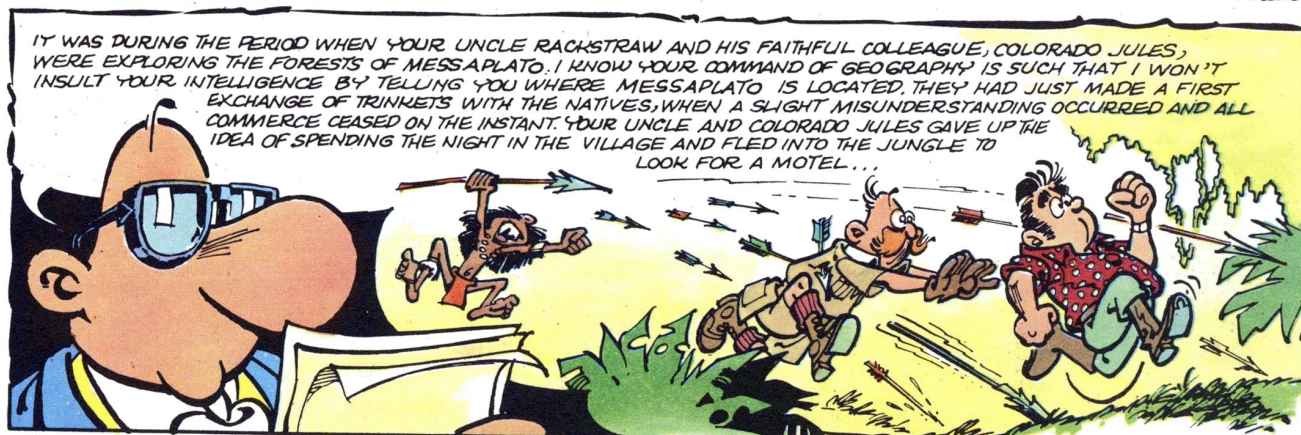
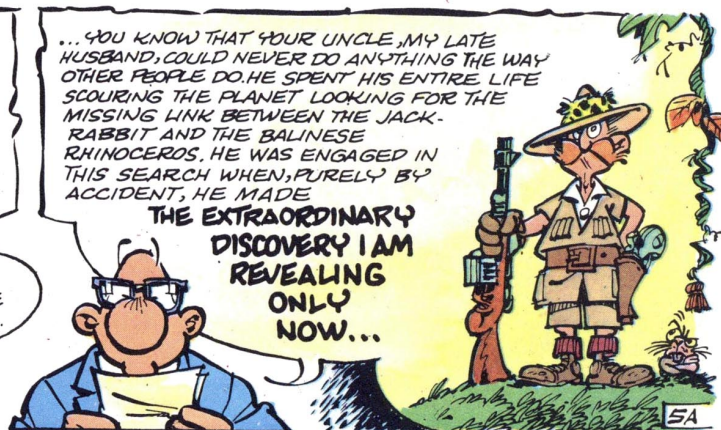
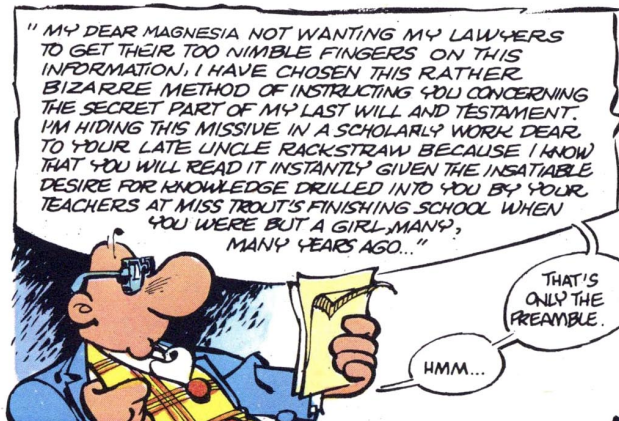
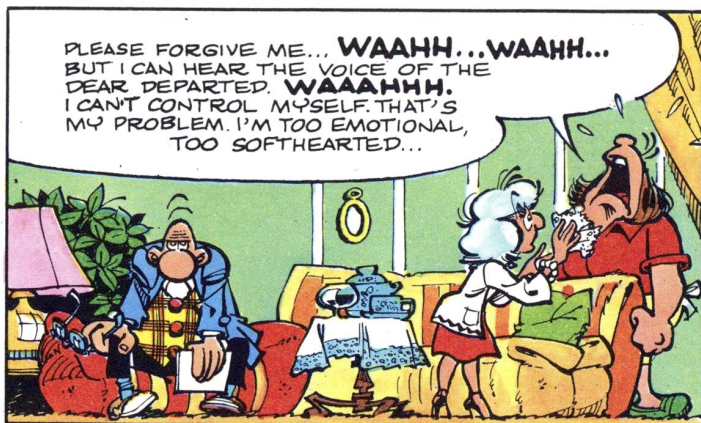
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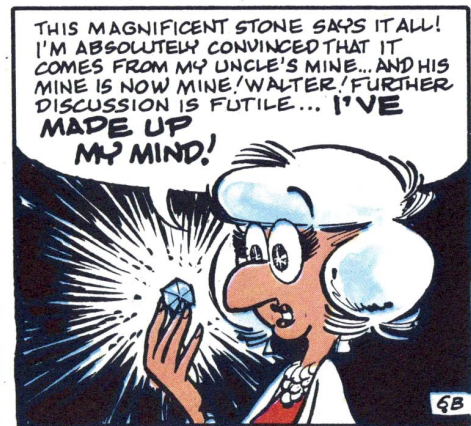
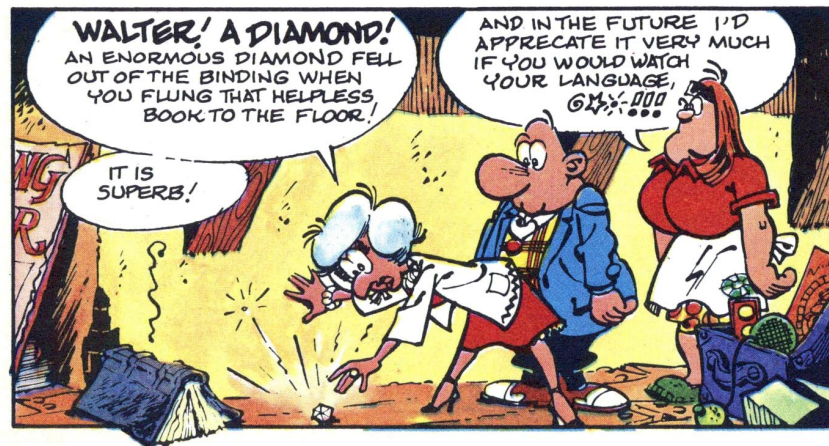
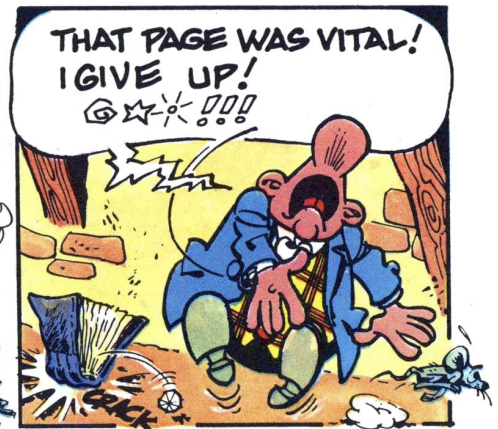
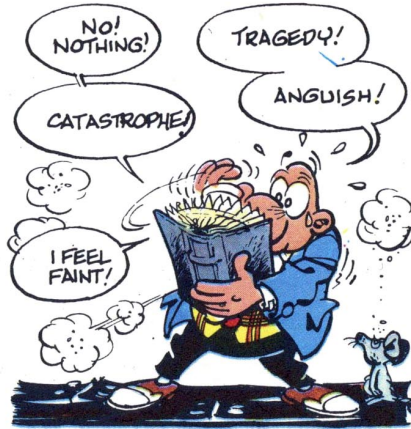
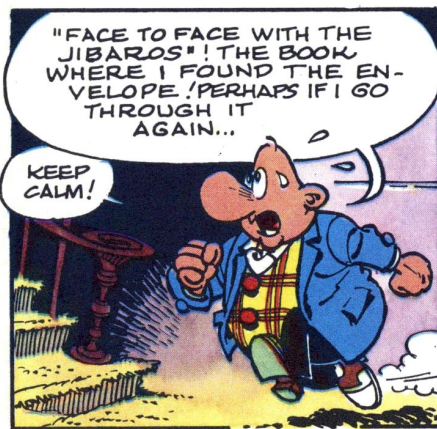
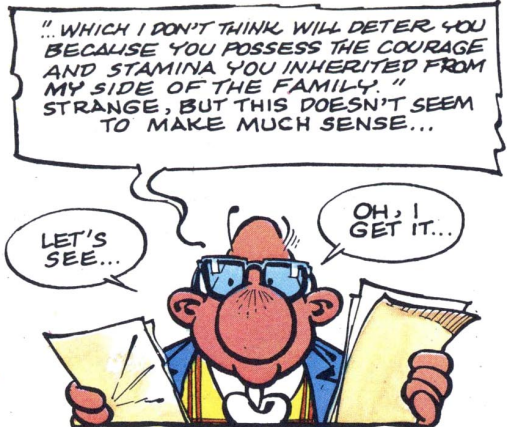
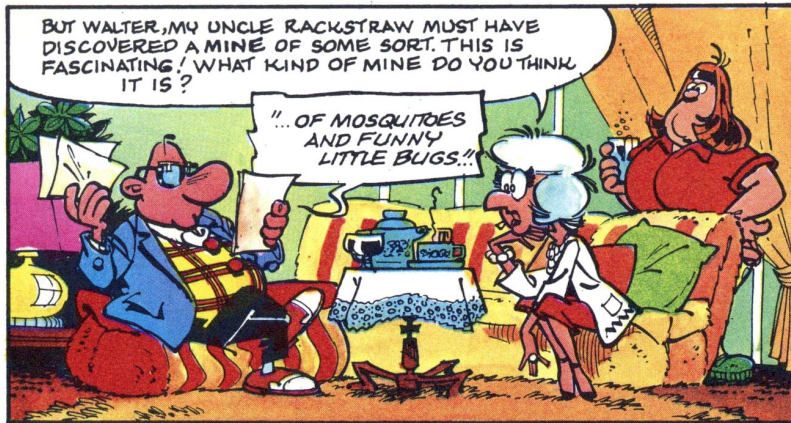


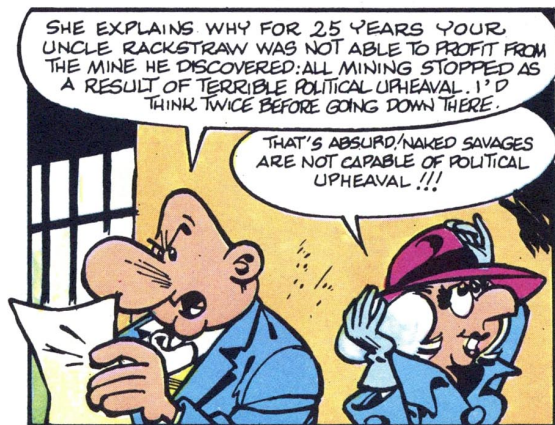
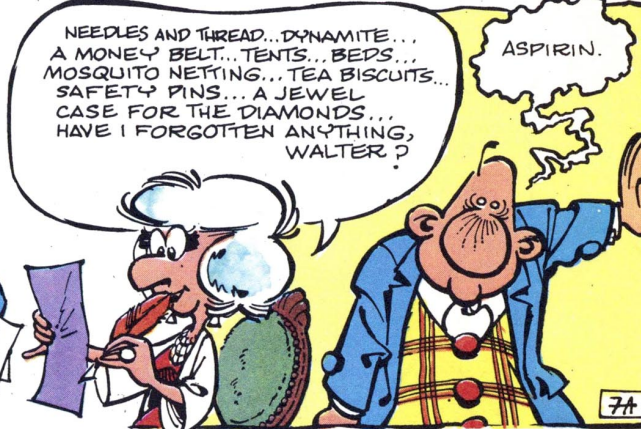
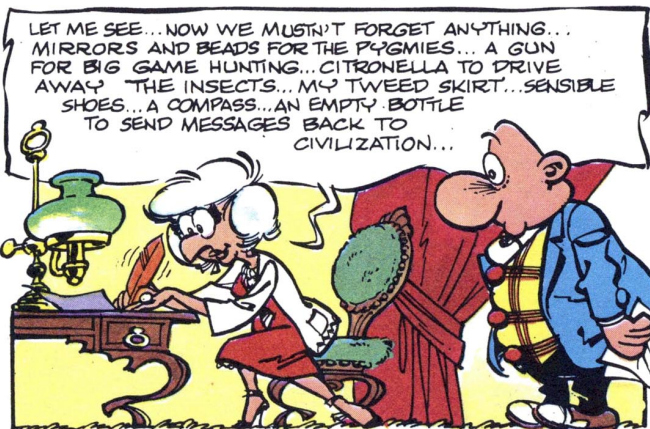
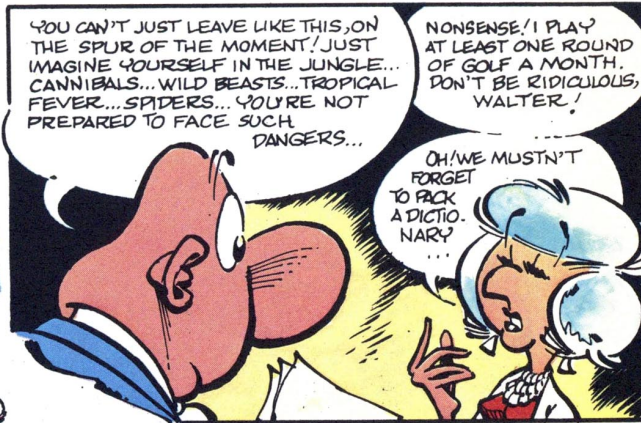
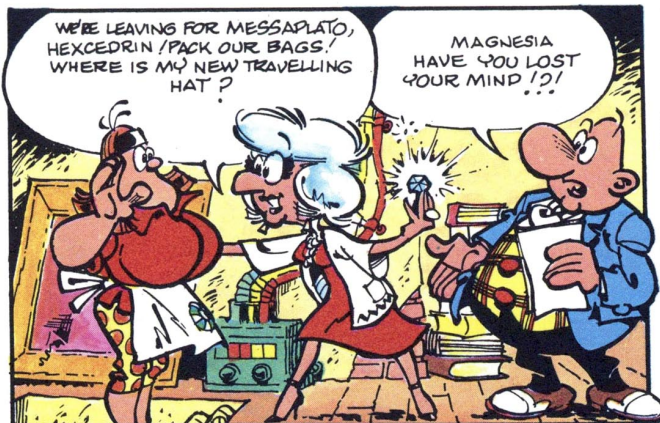


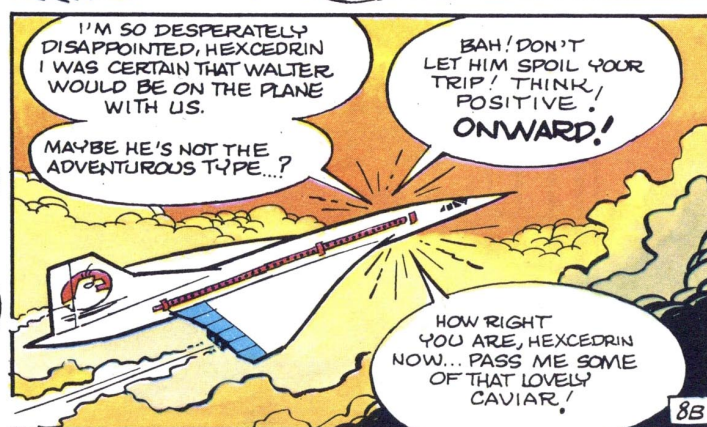
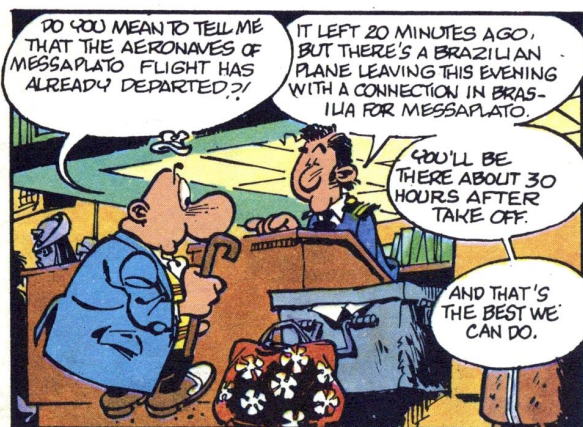
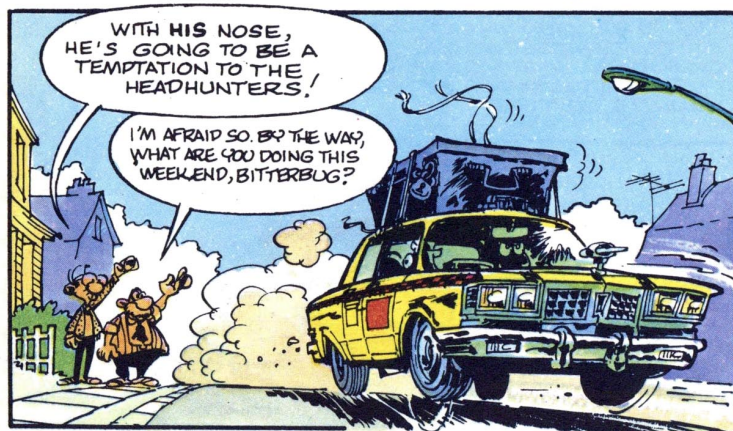
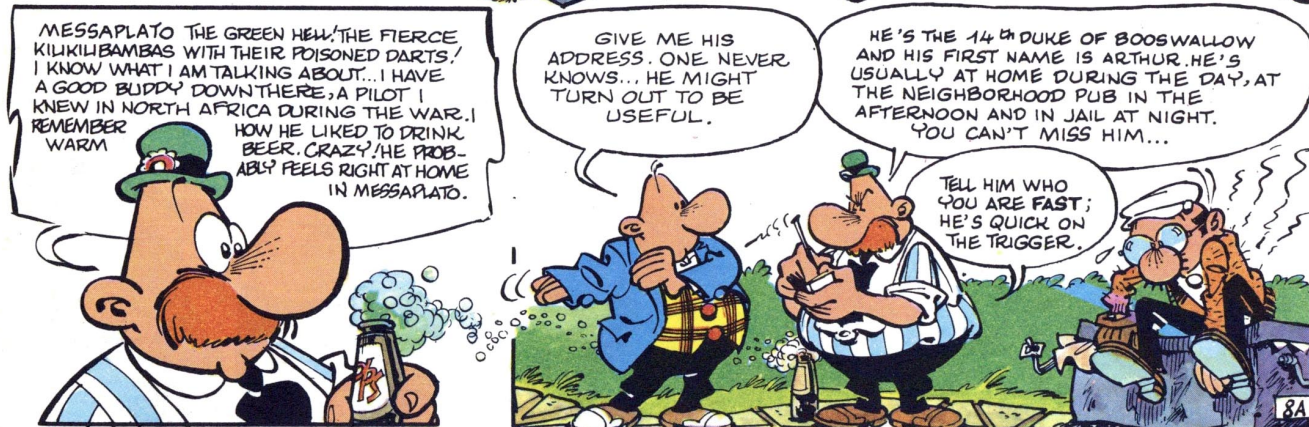
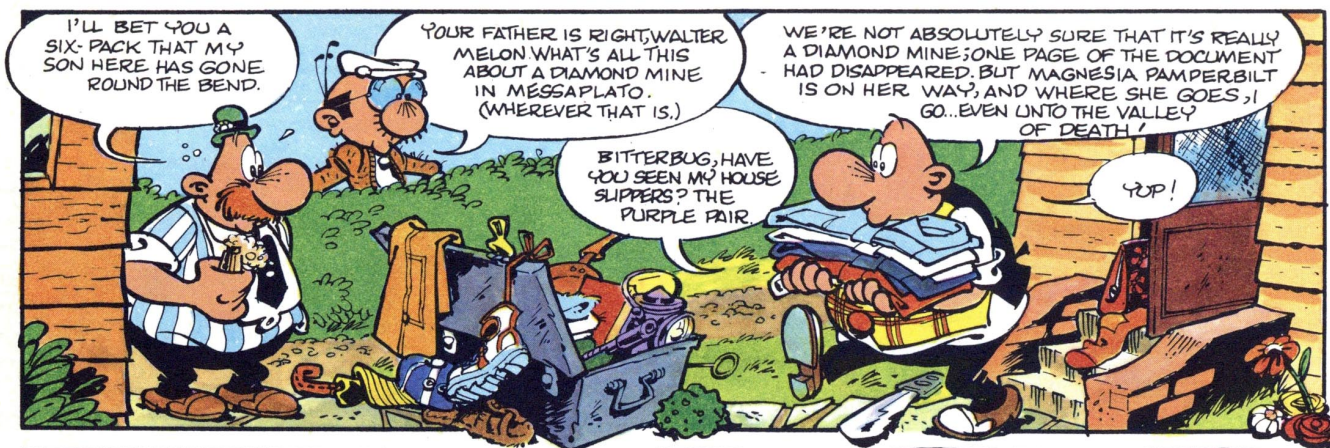


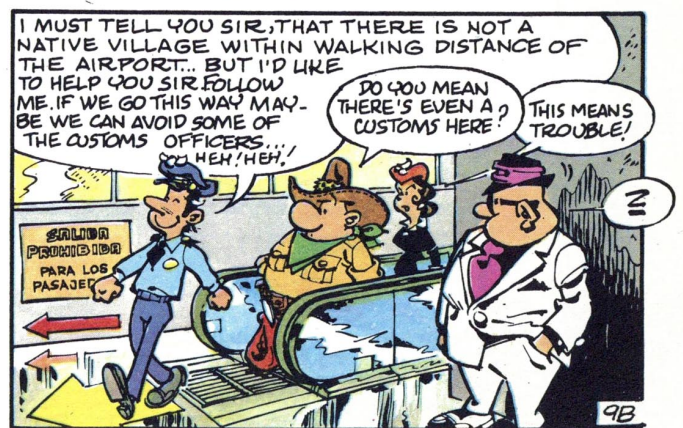
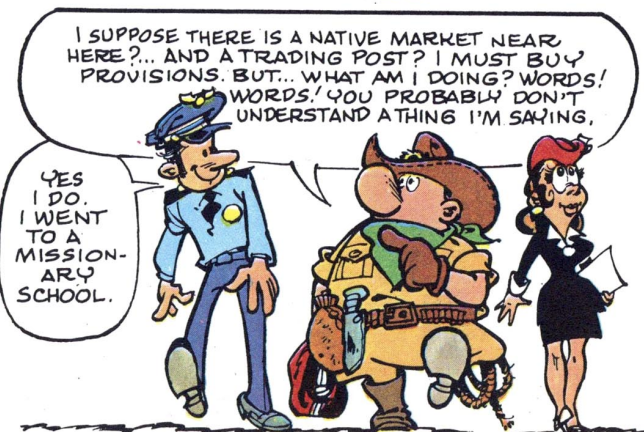
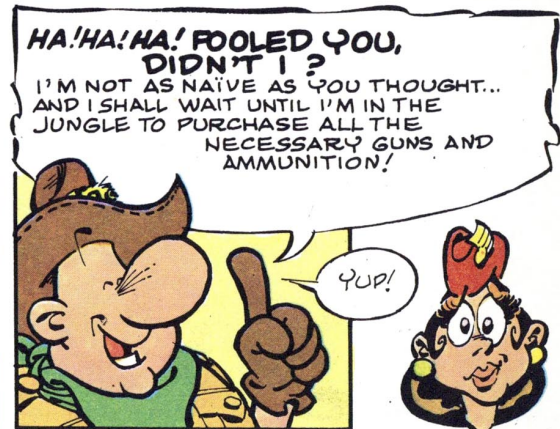
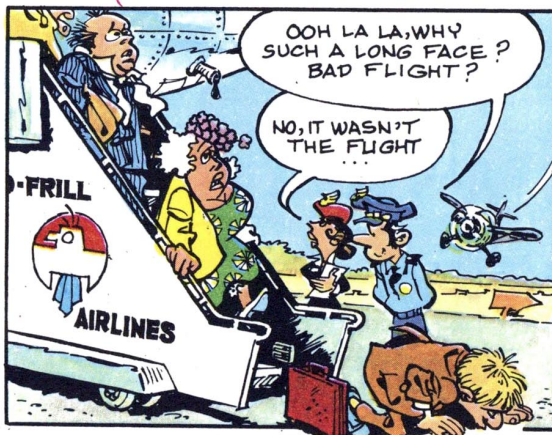
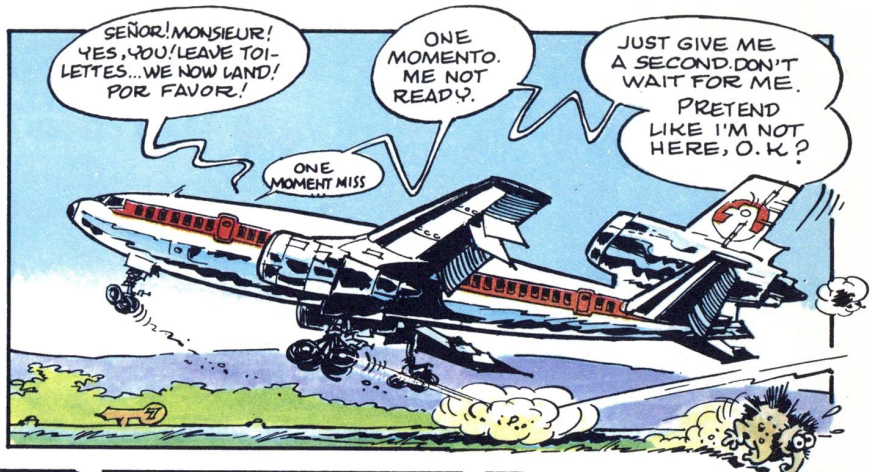


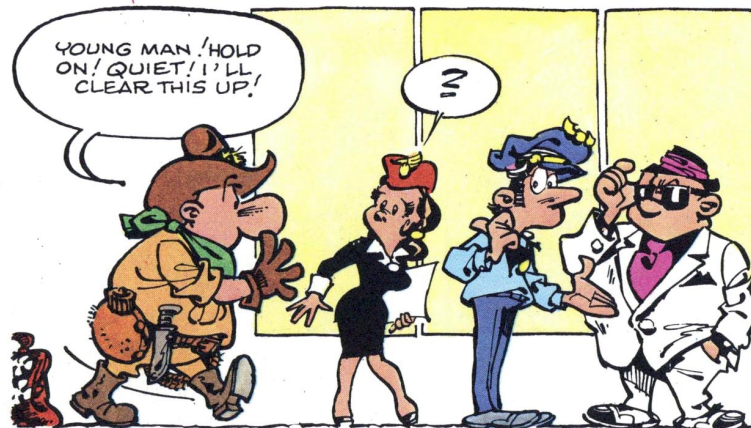
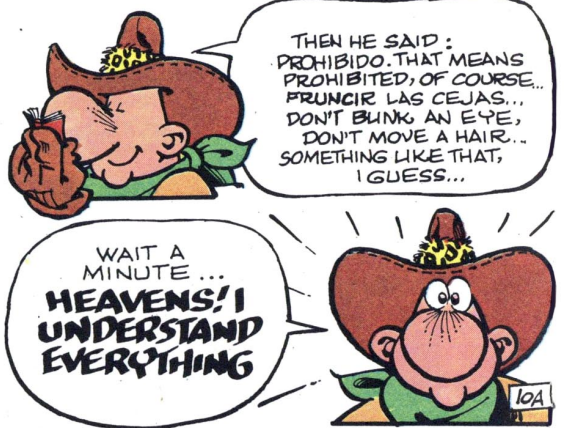
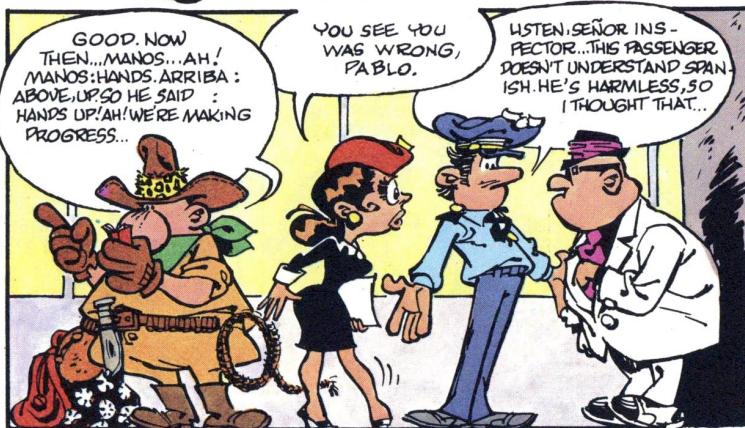
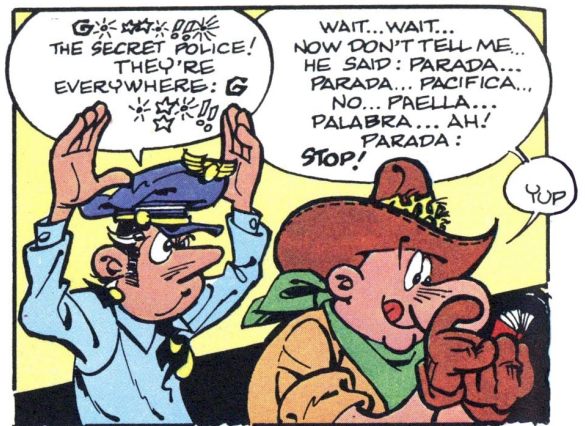


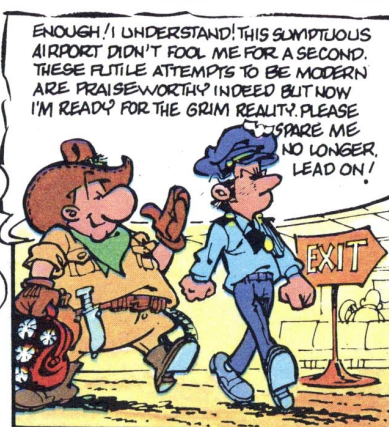
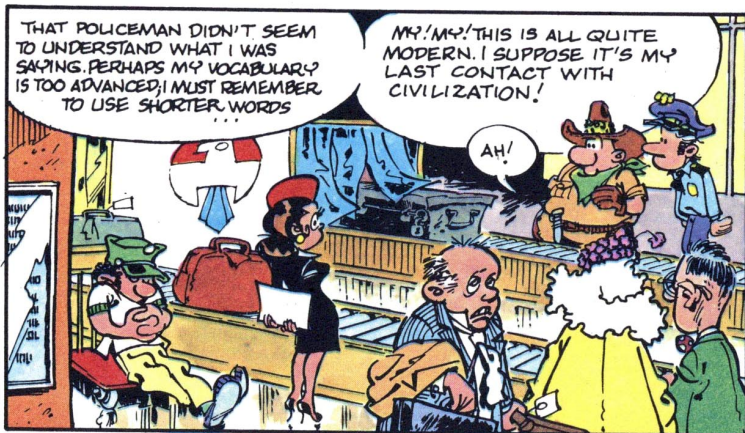
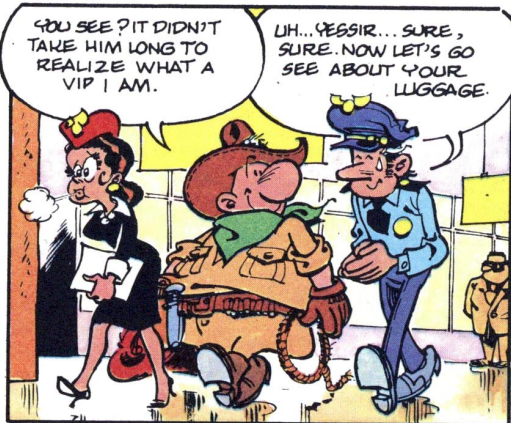
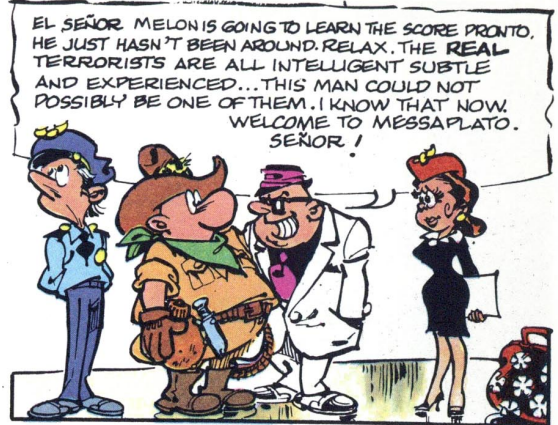


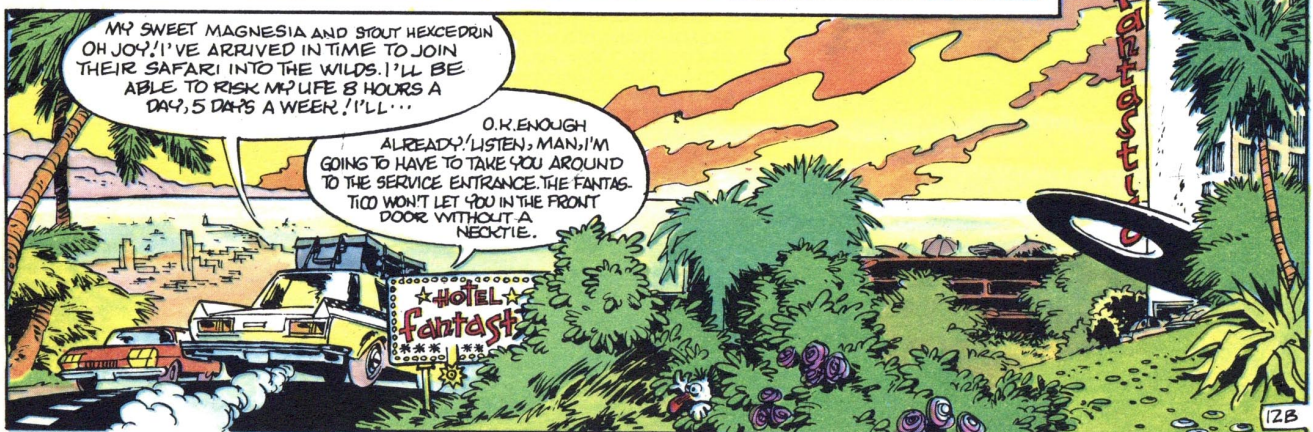
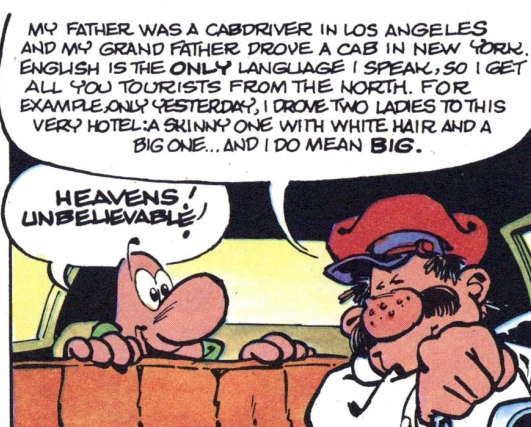
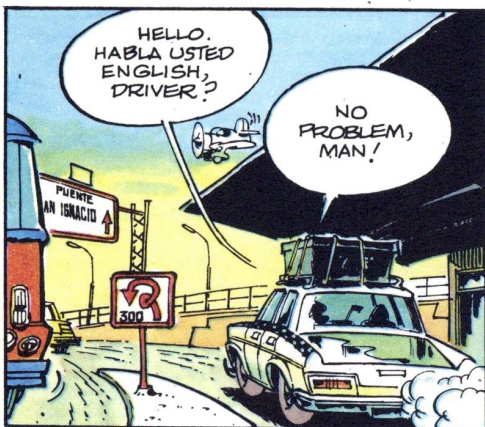
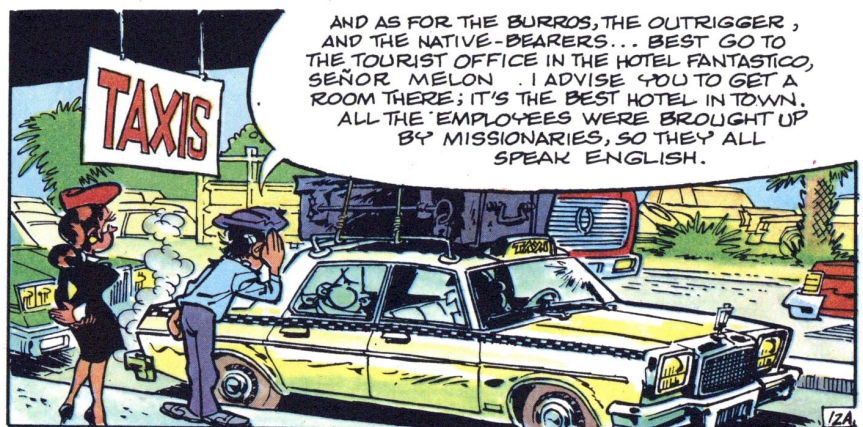
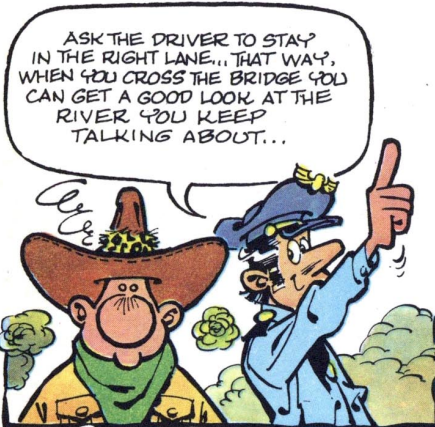
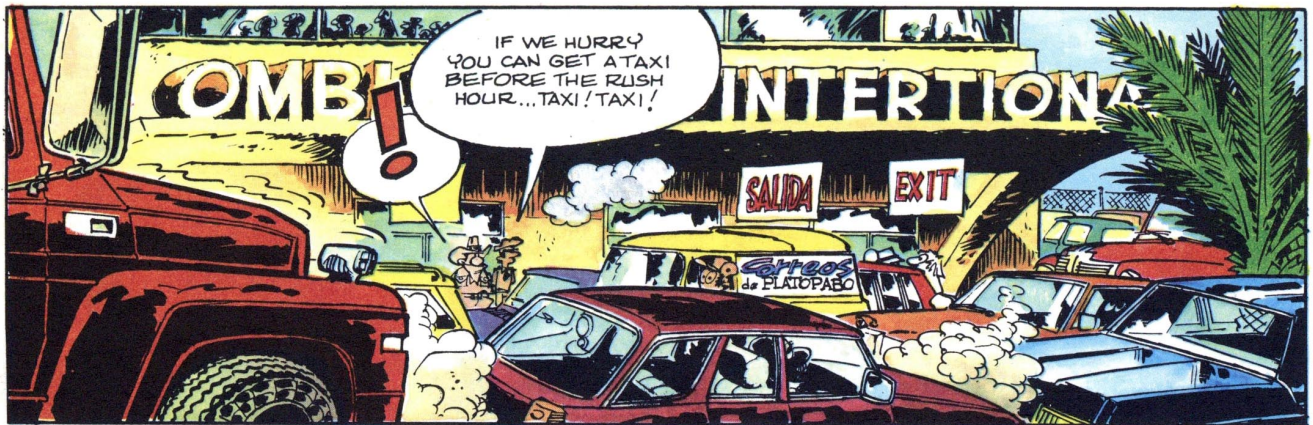


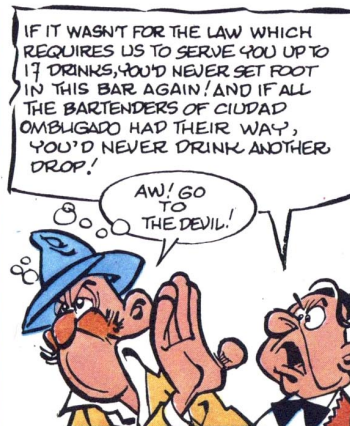
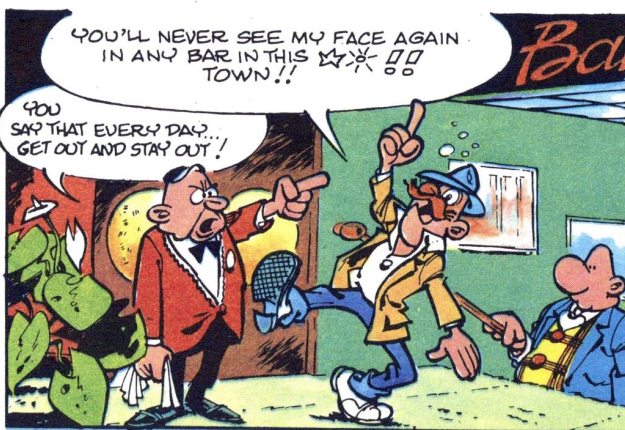
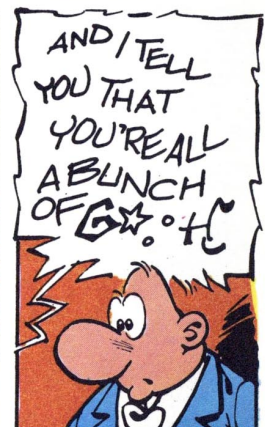
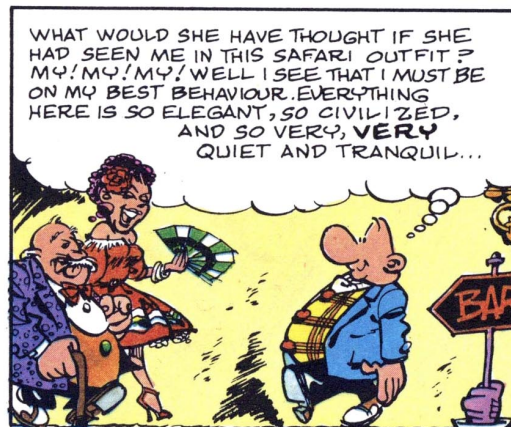
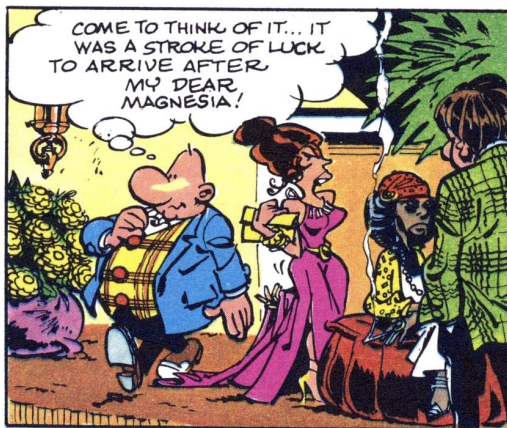
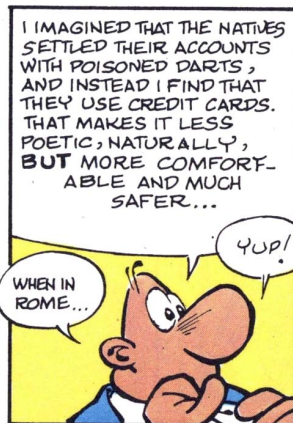
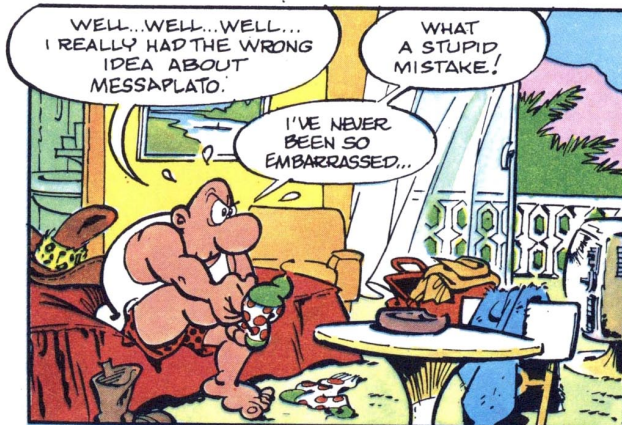
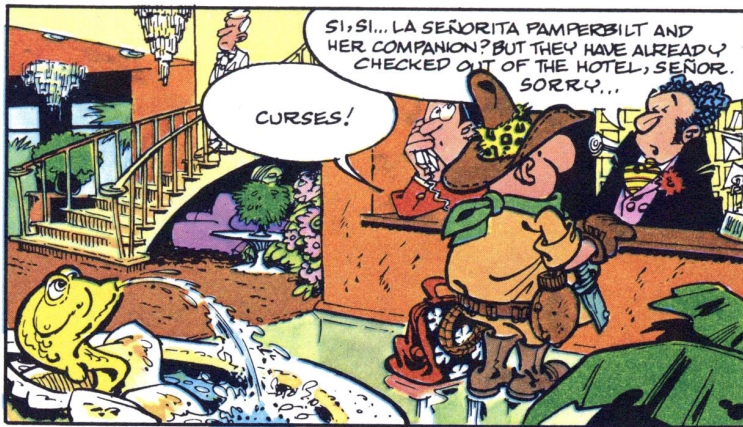


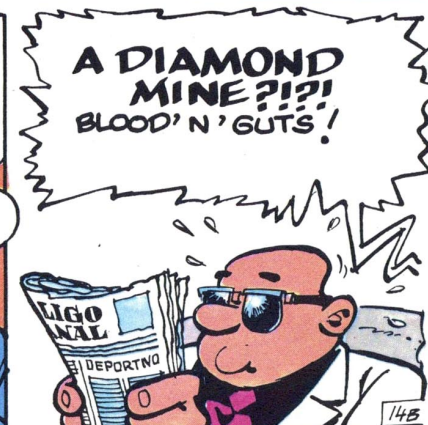
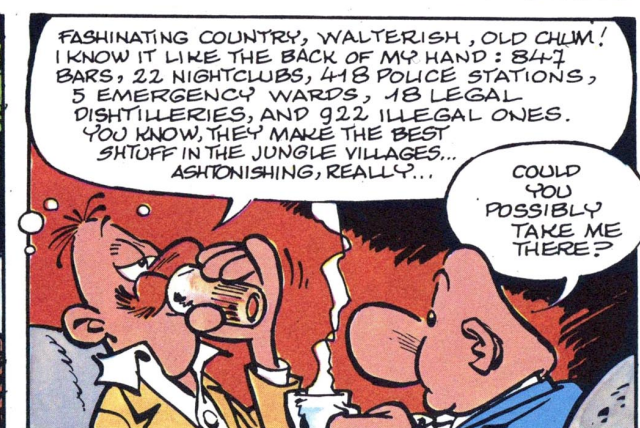
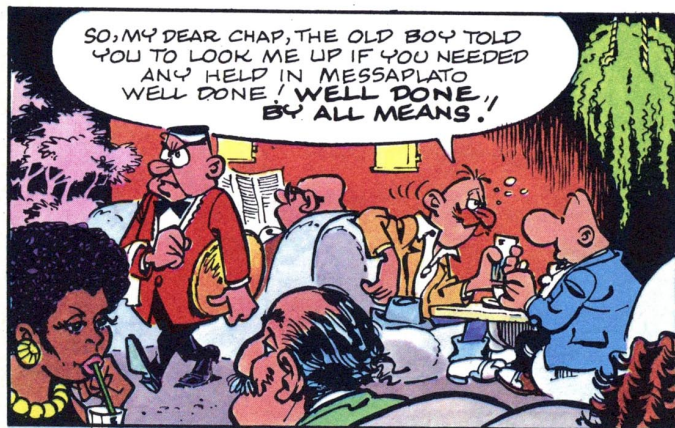
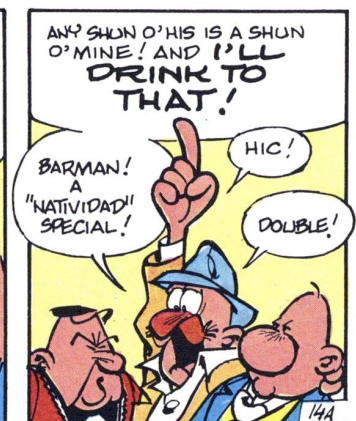
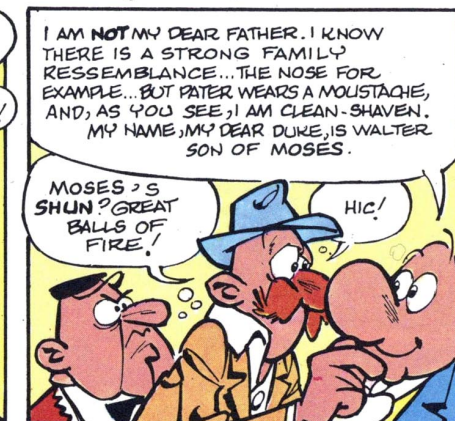
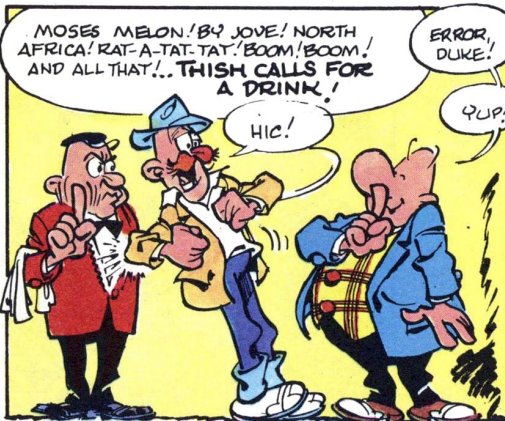
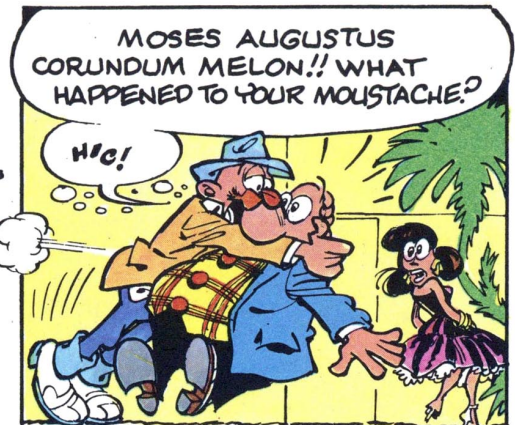
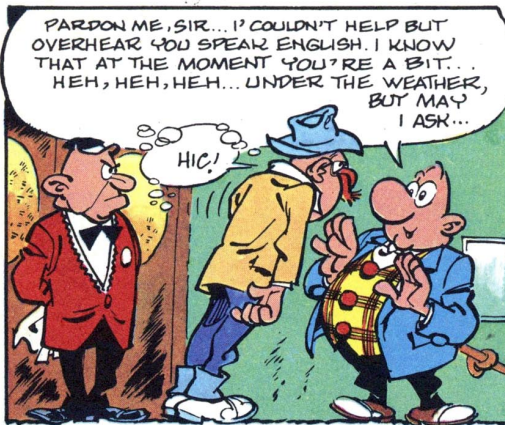


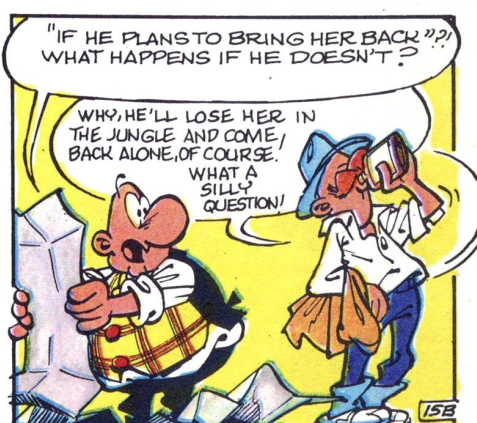
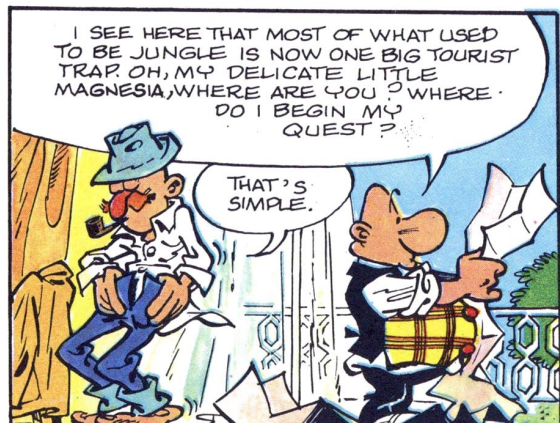
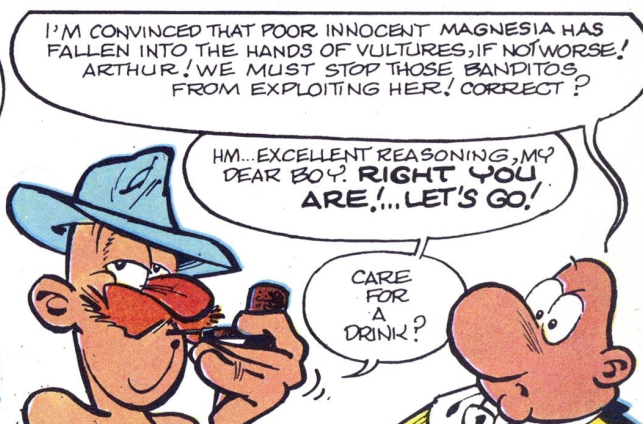
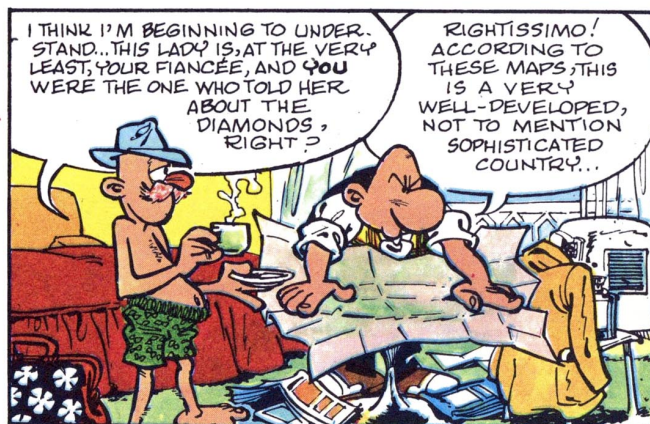
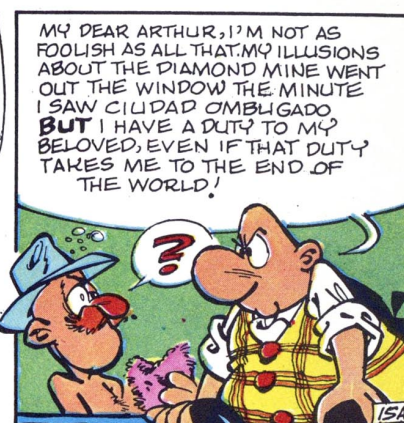
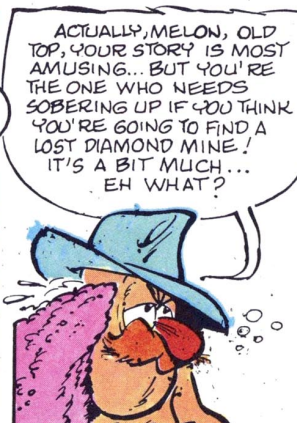
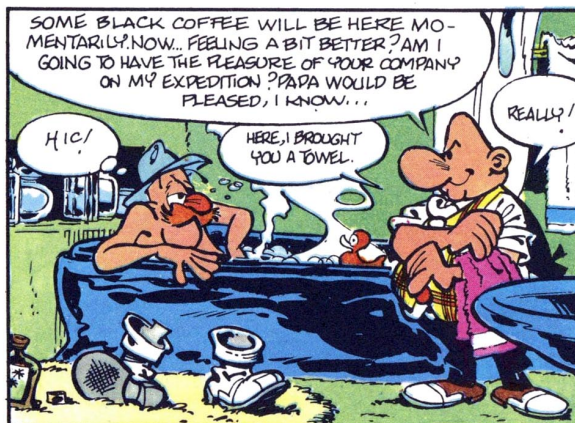








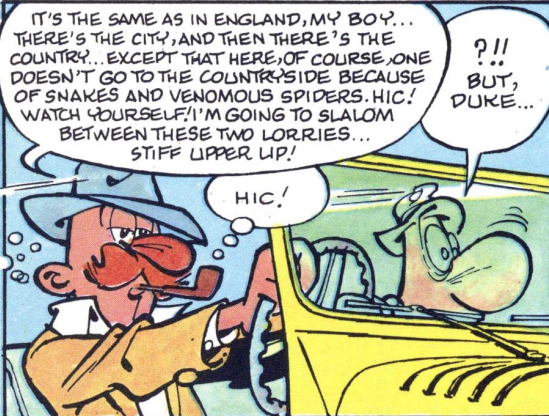




MY DEAR DUKE, I HATE TO MENTION IT... BUT A STORM OF UNCERTAINTY IS TROUBING THE USUALLY SMOOTH AND CALM SEA OF MY LIFE. ONCE AND FOR ALL IS MESSAPLATO A SAFE, MODERN COUNTRY? OR IS IT NOT?? YUP!!... BY THE WAY, I'LL BE MORE THAN GLAD TO TAKE OVER THE WHEEL IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE DRIVING.

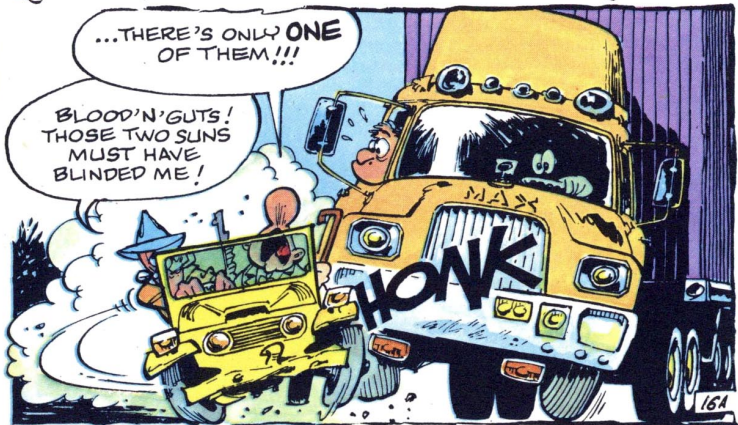


HA! DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT PROGRESS MAKES FOR SAFETY, OLD FELLOW? AND I DO FEEL LIKE DRIVING, THANK YOU SO MUCH.



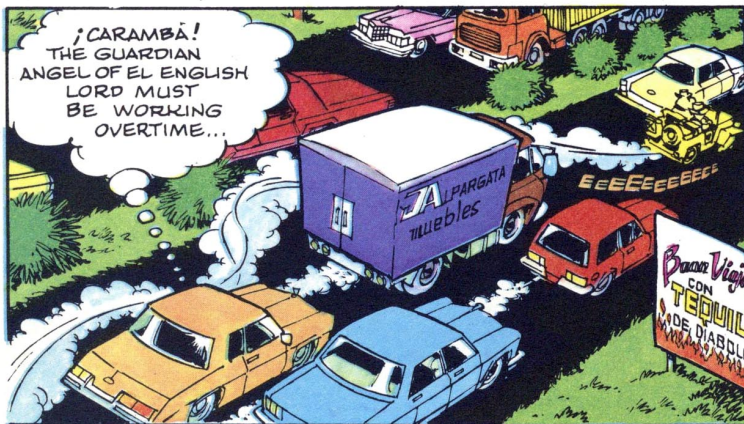
IT'S THE SAME AS IN ENGLAND, MY BOY... THERE'S THE CITY, AND THEN THERE'S THE COUNTRY... EXCEPT THAT HERE, OF COURSE, ONE DOESN'T GO TO THE COUNTRYSIDE BECAUSE OF SNAKES AND VENOMOUS SPIDERS. HIC! WATCH YOURSELF! I'M GOING TO SLALOM BETWEEN THESE TWO LORRIES... STIFF UPPER LIP!

?!! BUT, DUKE...

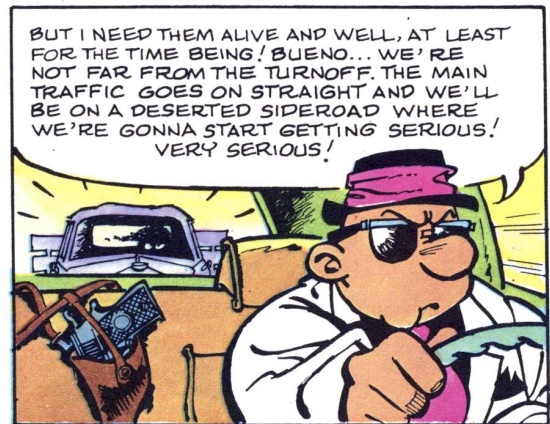


...THERE'S ONLY ONE OF THEM!!!

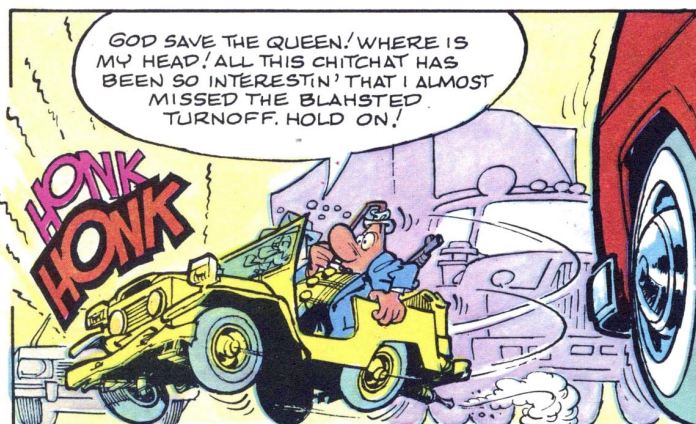
BLOOD 'N' GUTS! THOSE TWO SUNS MUST HAVE BLINDED ME!



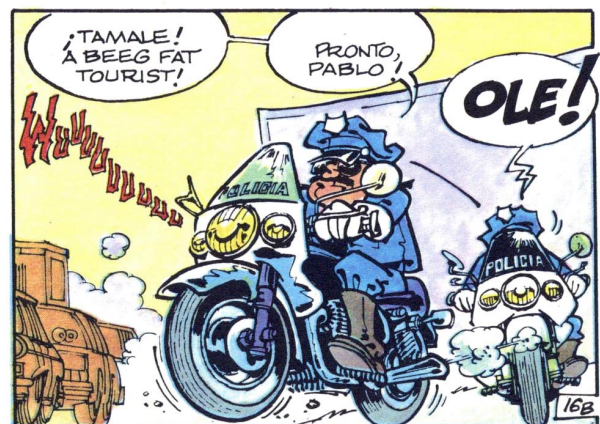
¡CARAMBÁ! THE GUARDIAN ANGEL OF EL ENGLISH LORD MUST BE WORKING OVERTIME...



BUT I NEED THEM ALIVE AND WELL, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING! BUENO... WE'RE NOT FAR FROM THE TURNOFF. THE MAIN TRAFFIC GOES ON STRAIGHT AND WE'LL BE ON A DESERTED SIDEROAD WHERE WE'RE GONNA START GETTING SERIOUS! VERY SERIOUS!



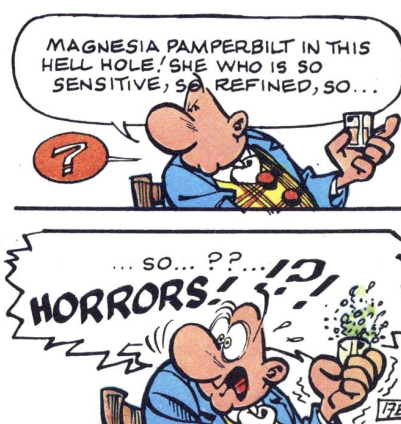
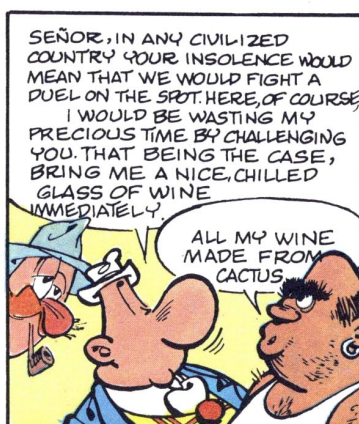
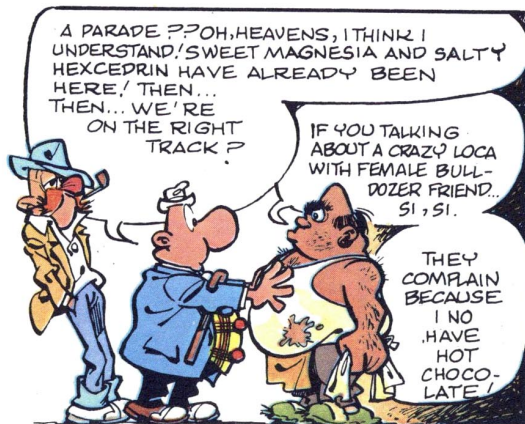
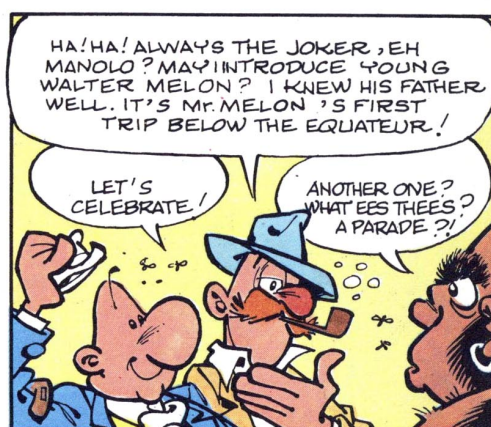
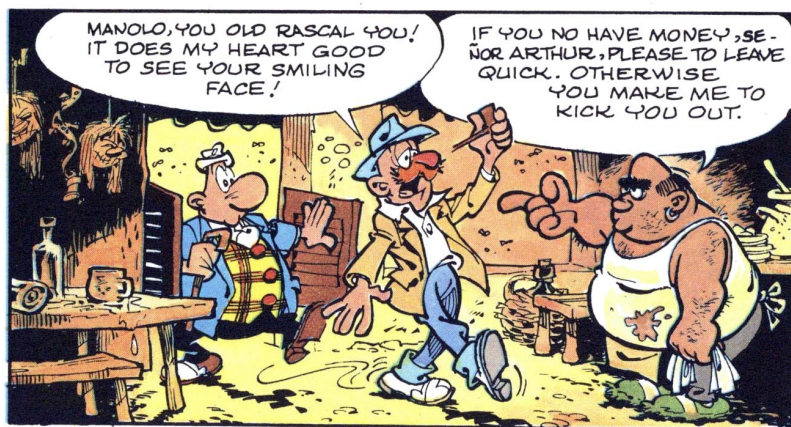
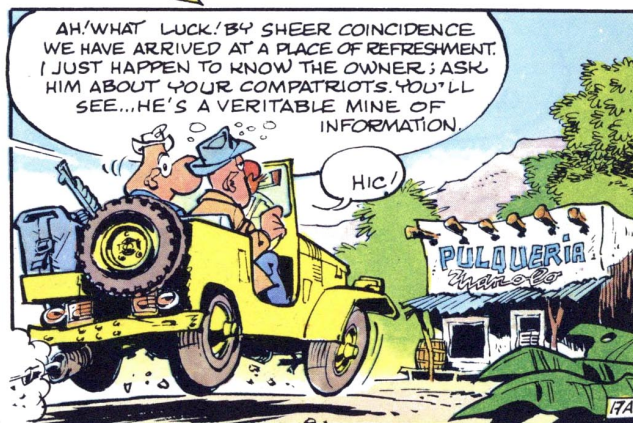
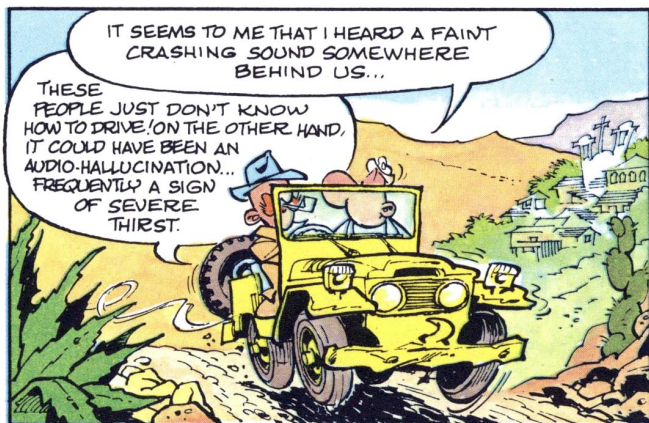
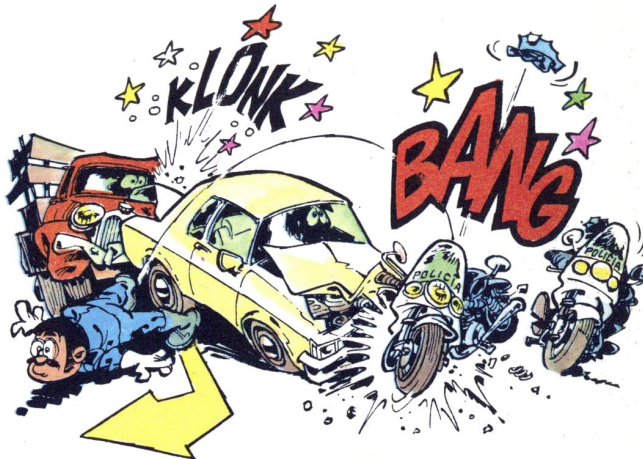
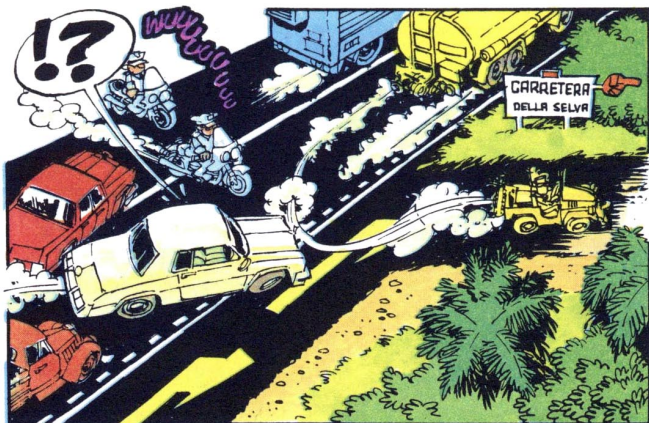
GOD SAVE THE QUEEN! WHERE IS MY HEAD? ALL THIS CHITCHAT HAS BEEN SO INTERESTIN' THAT I ALMOST MISSED THE BLASTED TURNOFF. HOLD ON!

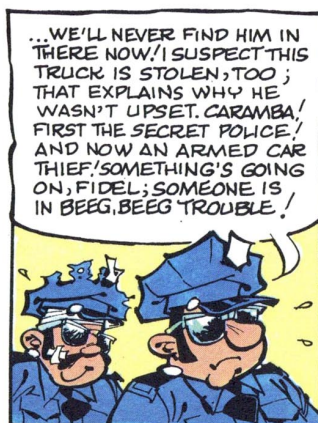
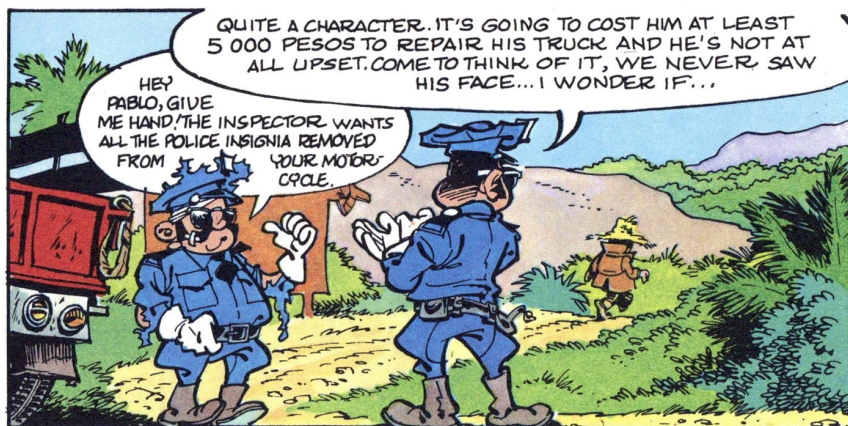
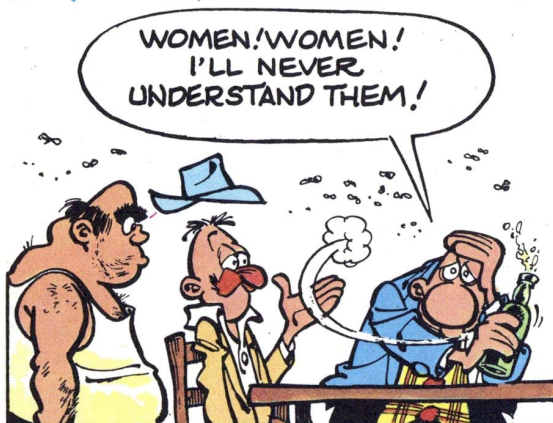
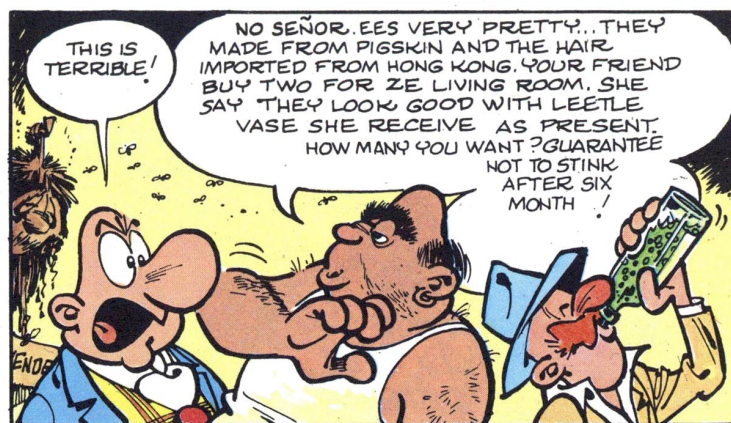


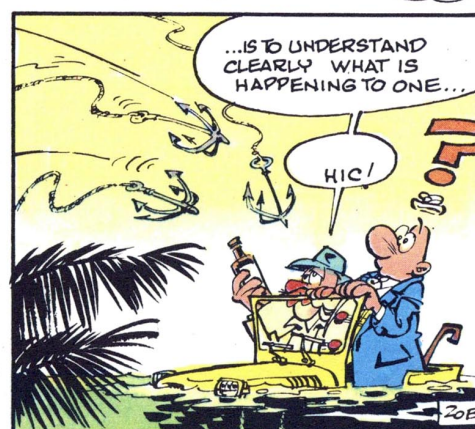
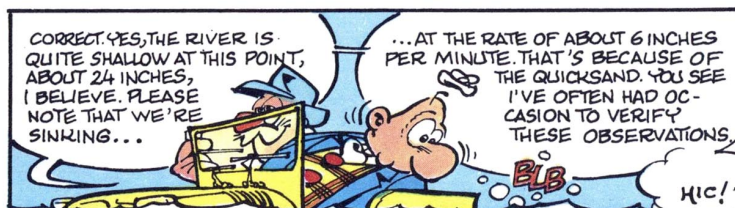
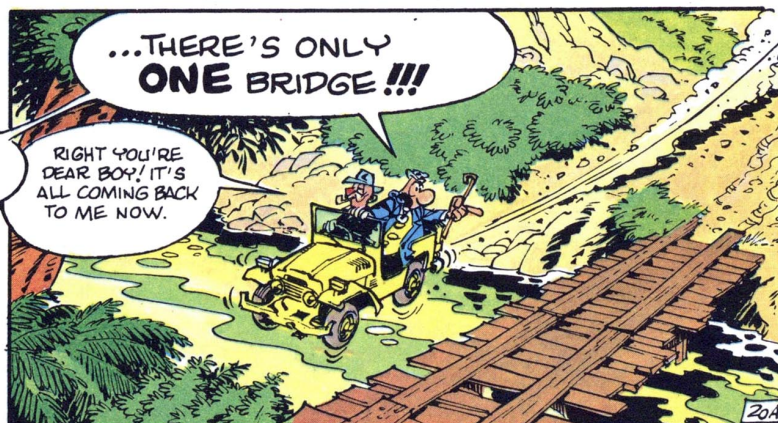
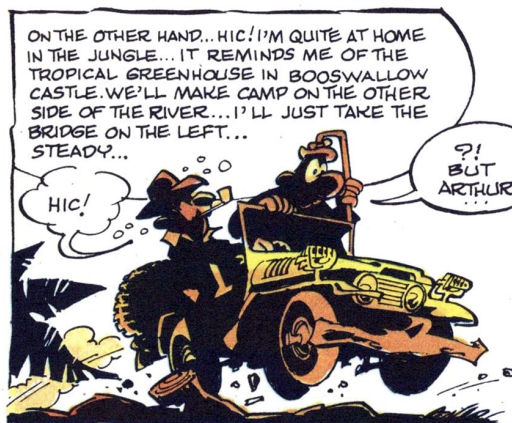
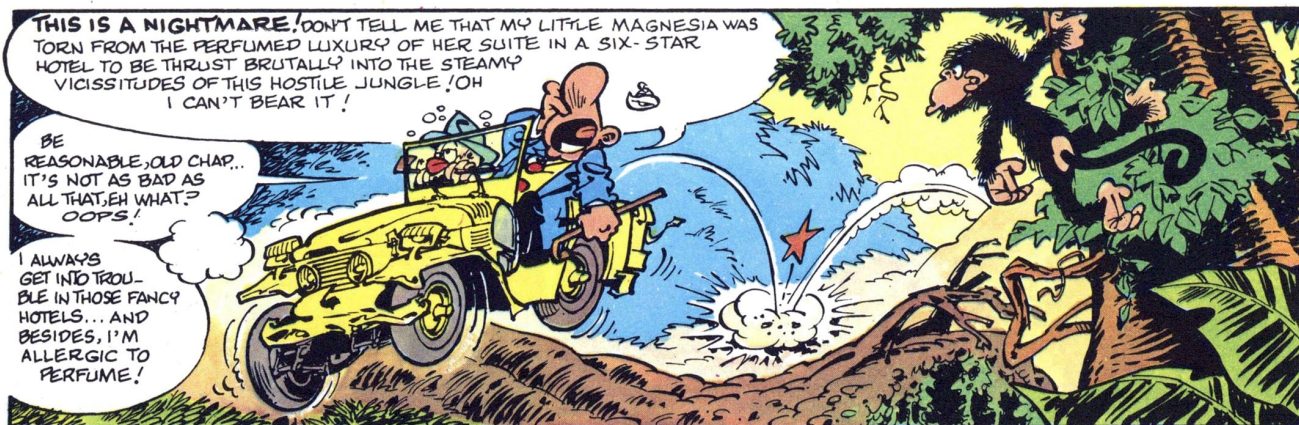
¡TAMALE! A BEEG FAT TOURIST!

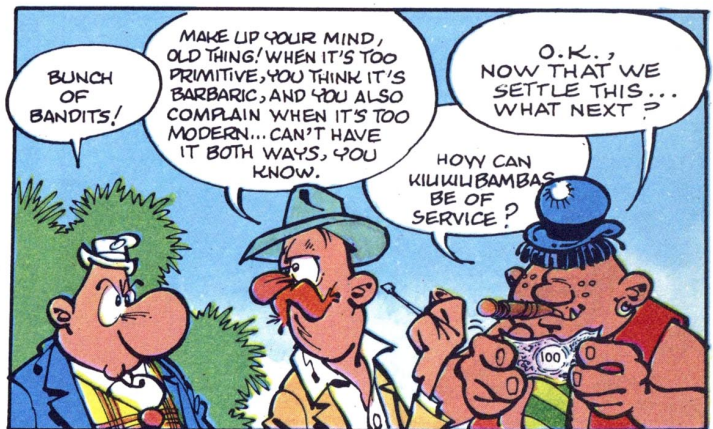
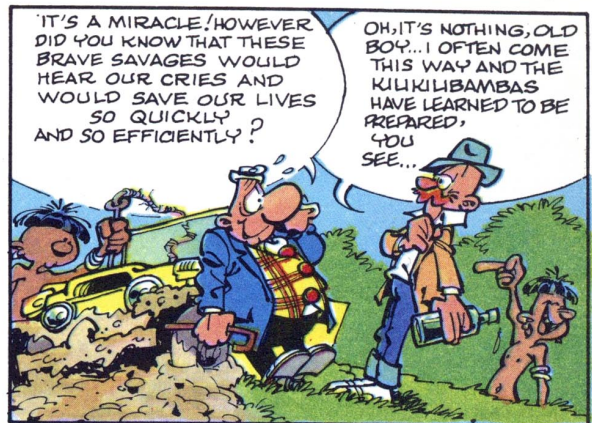
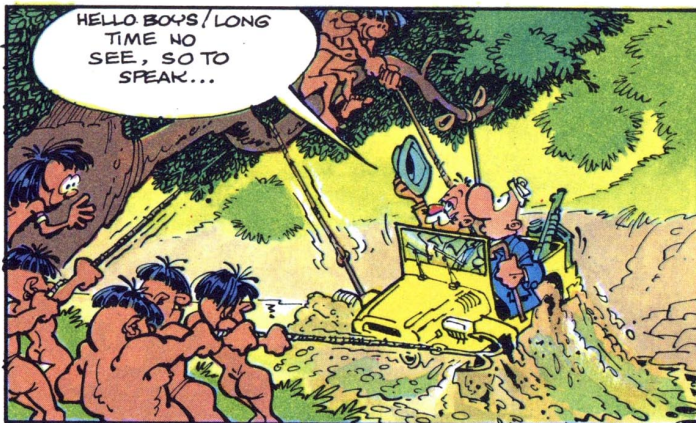
PRONTO, PABLO!

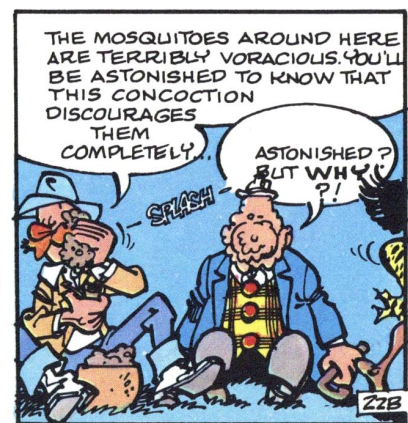
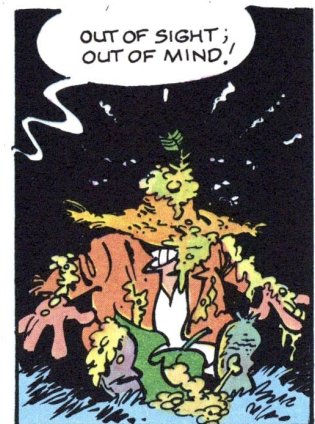
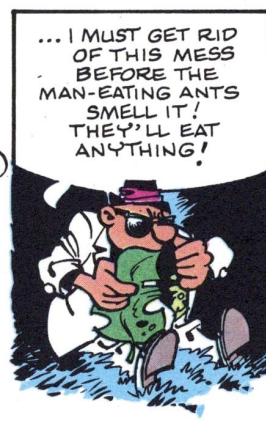
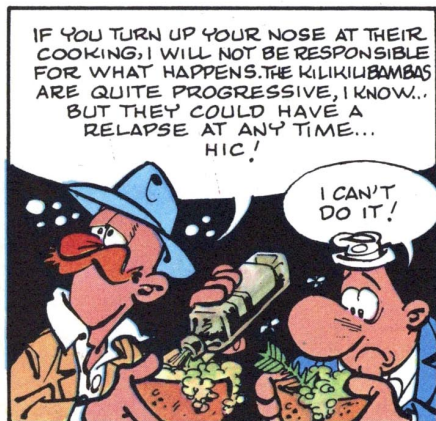
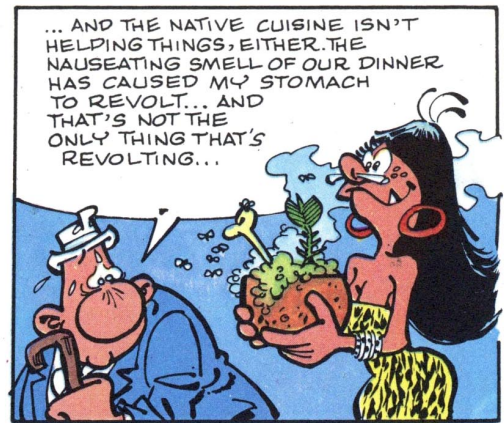
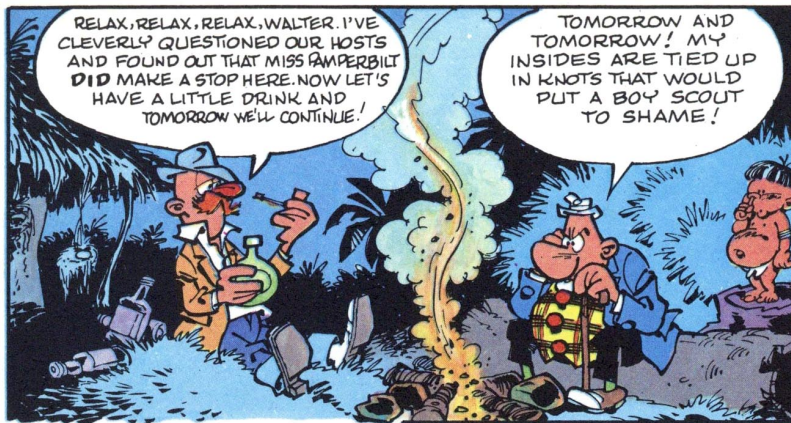
OLE!

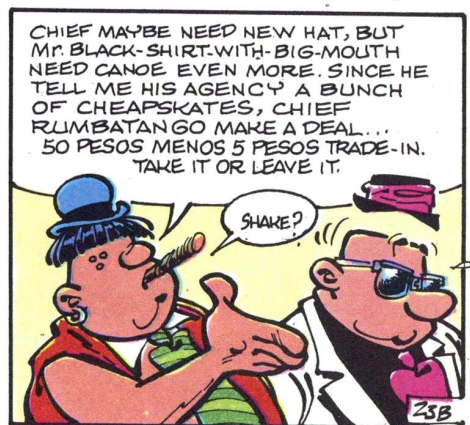
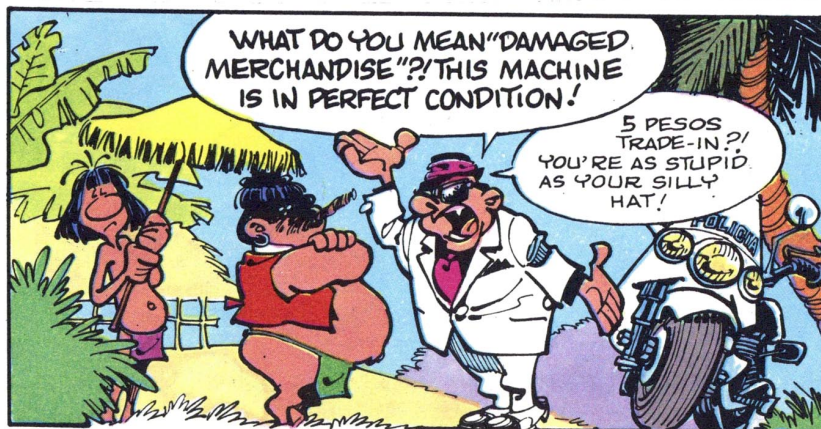
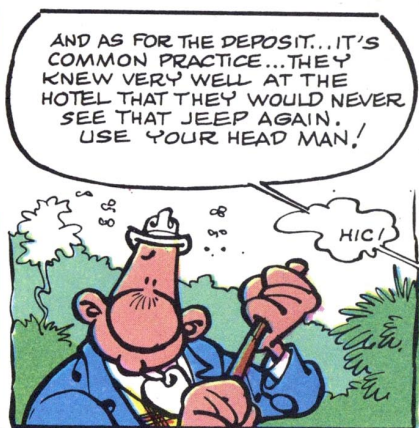
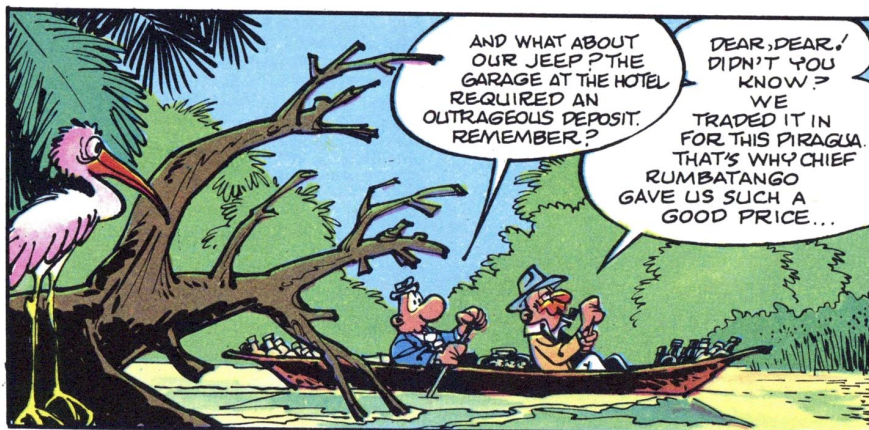
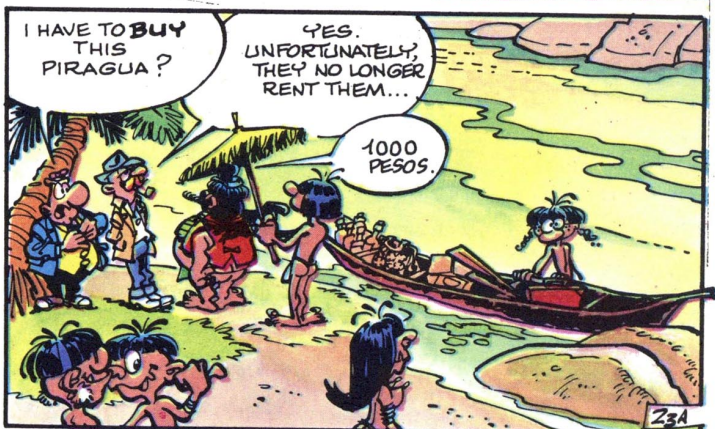
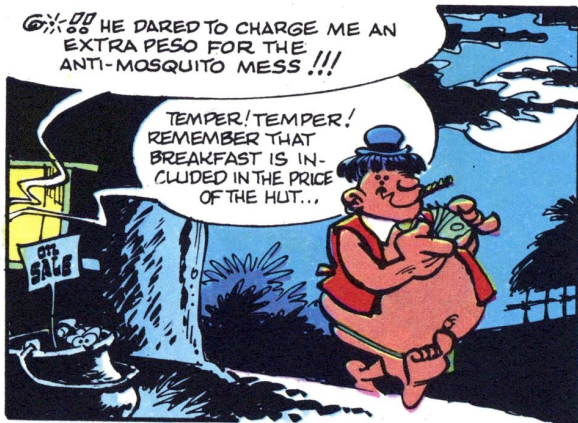
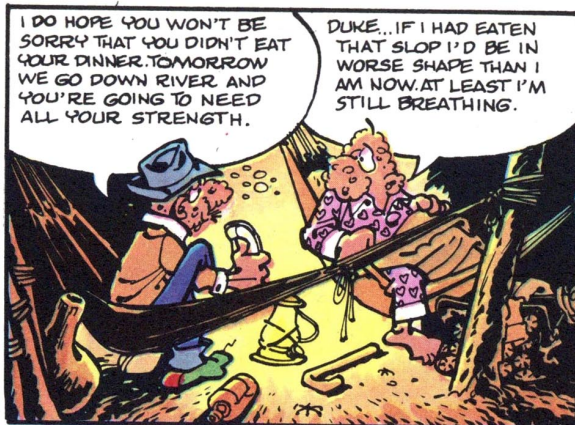


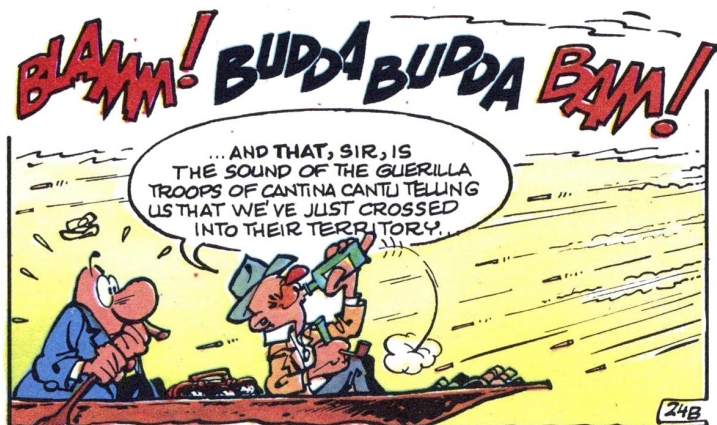
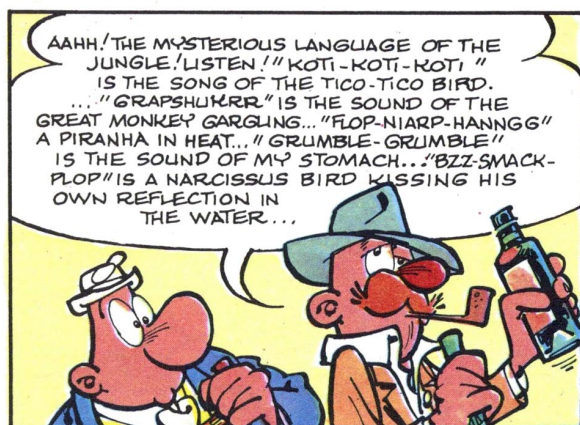
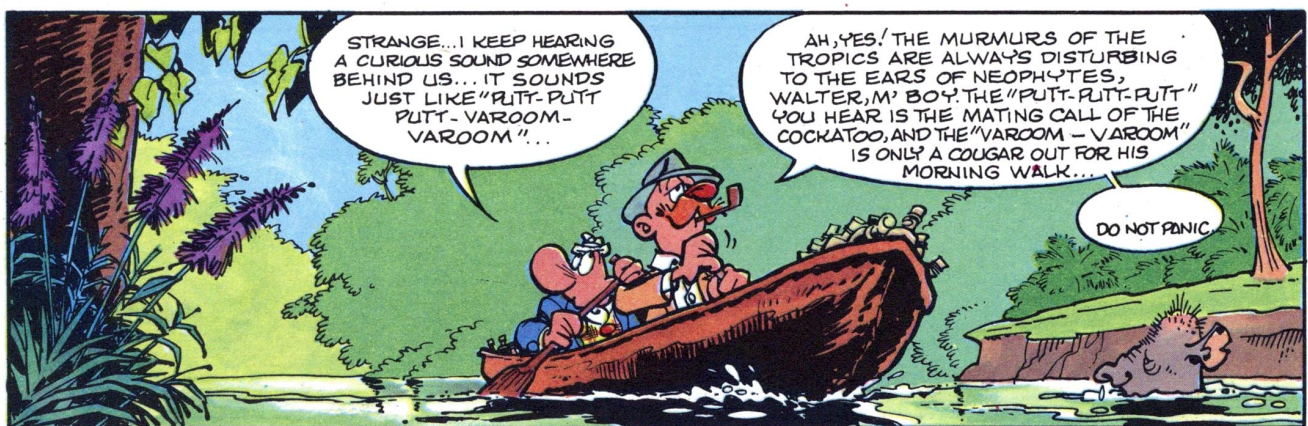
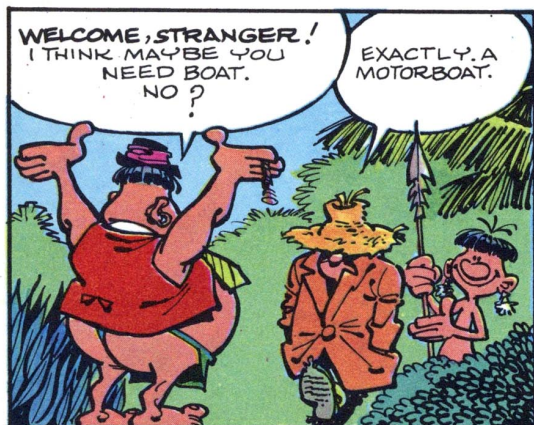
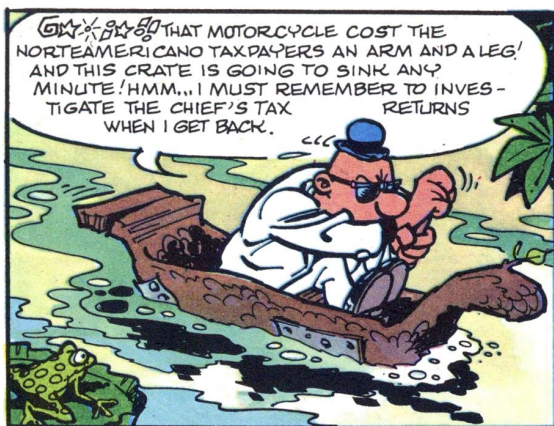


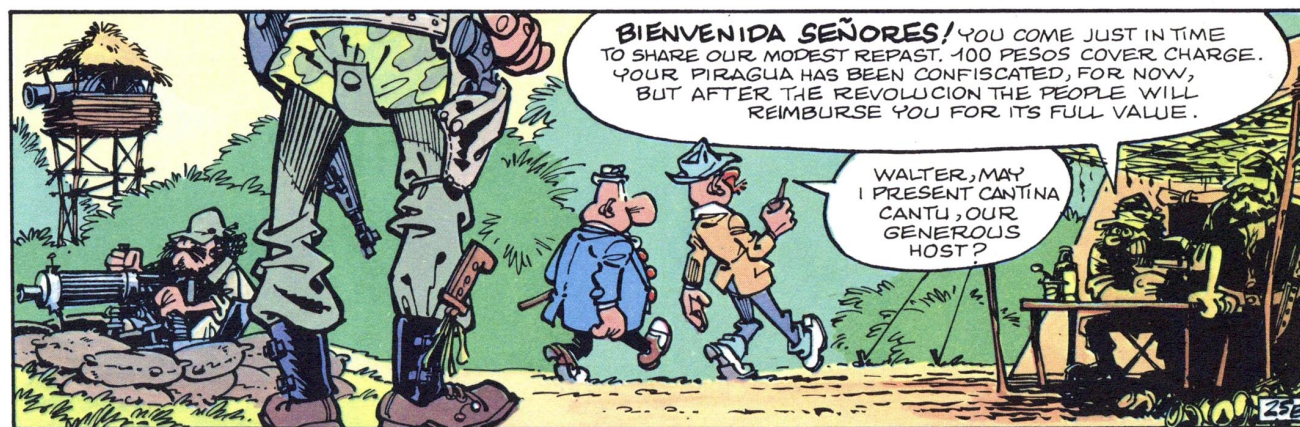
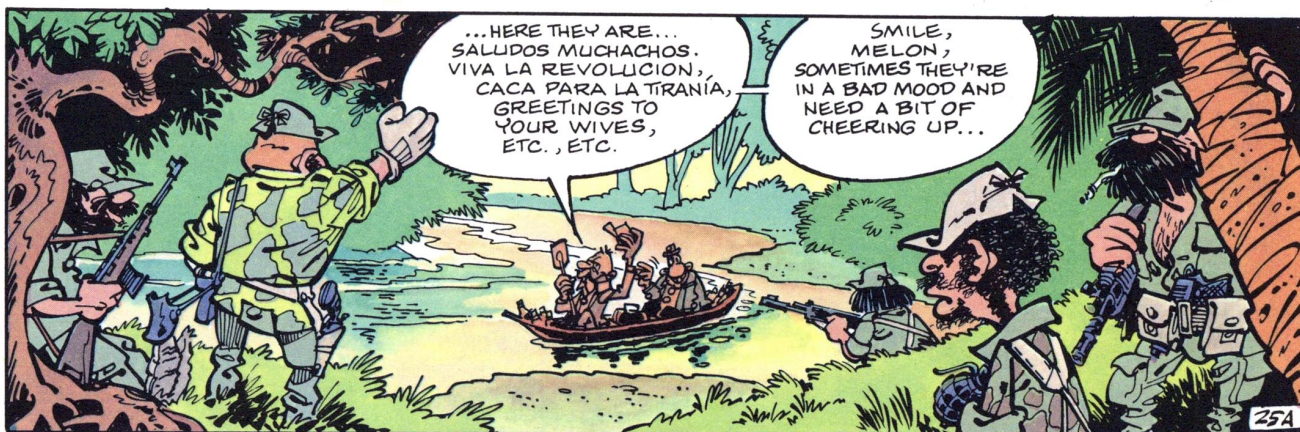
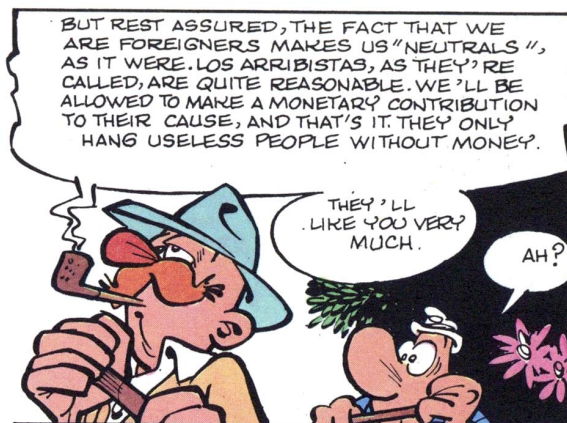
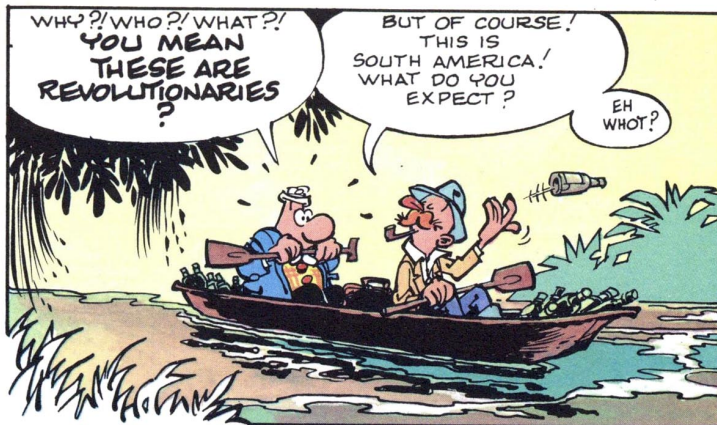


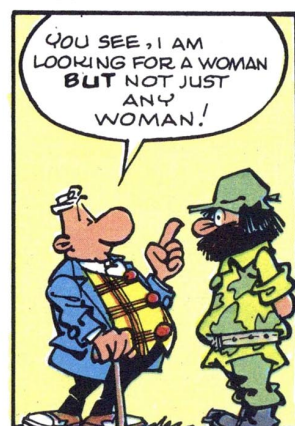
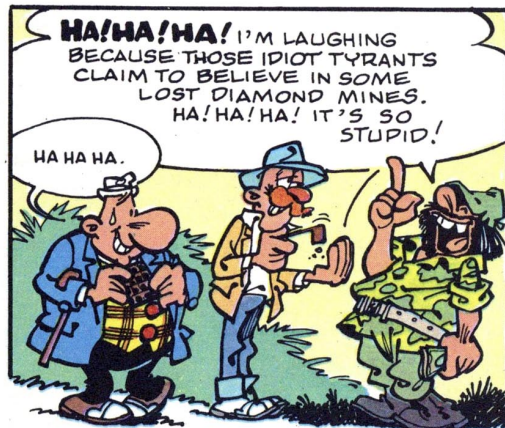
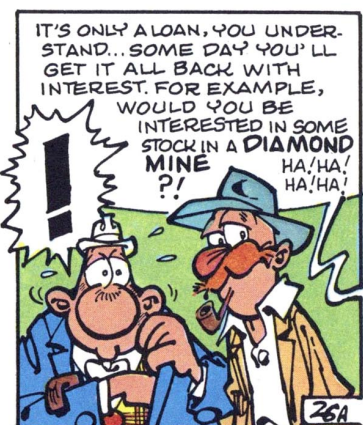
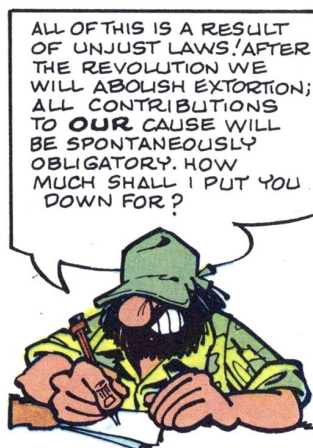
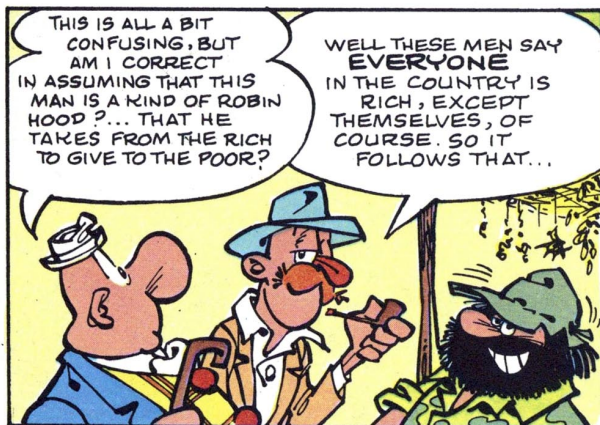
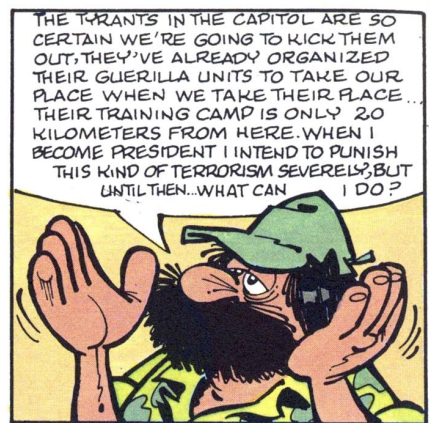
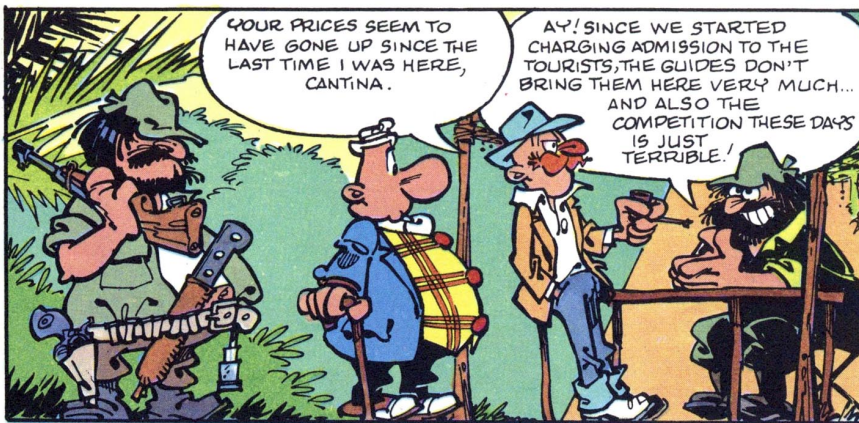


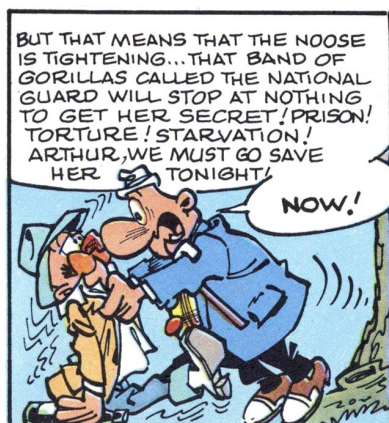
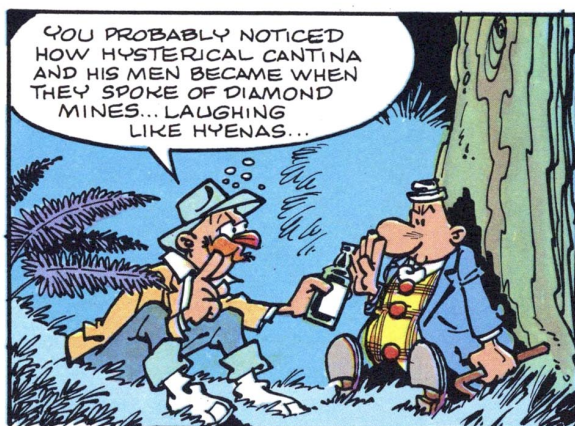
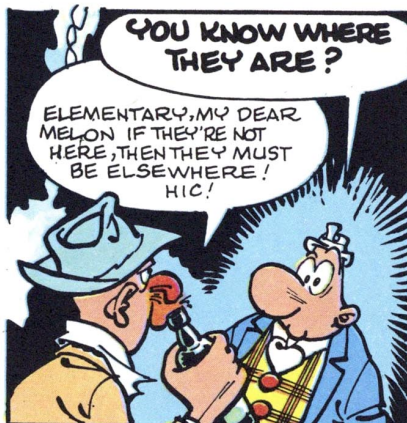
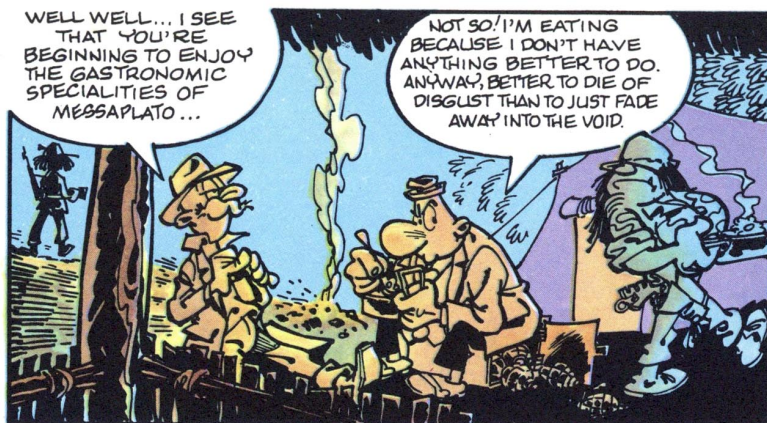


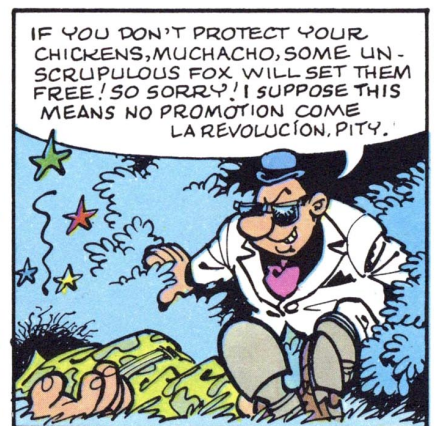
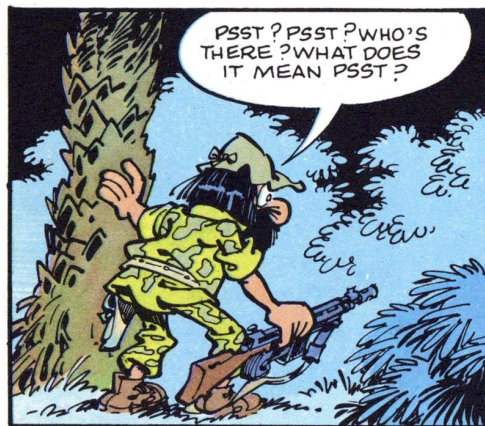
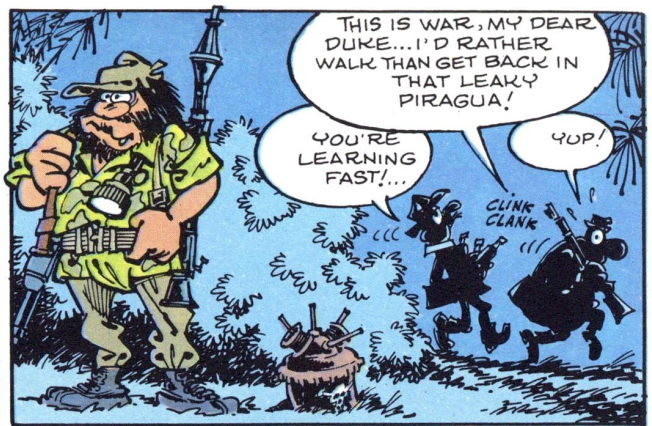


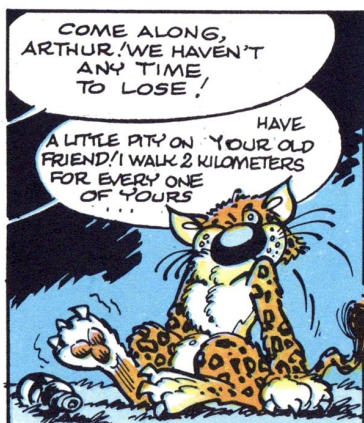
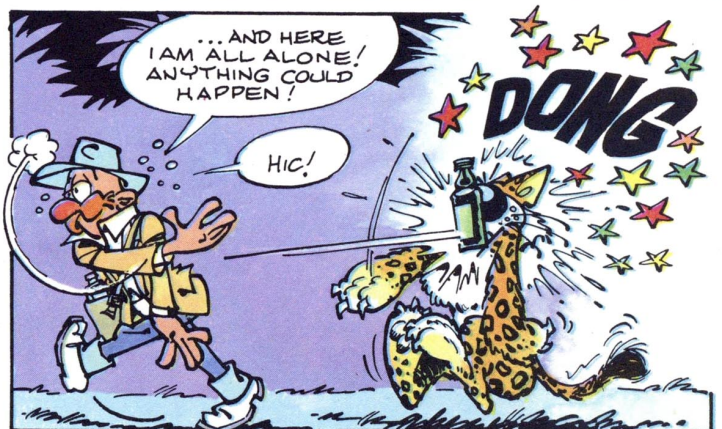
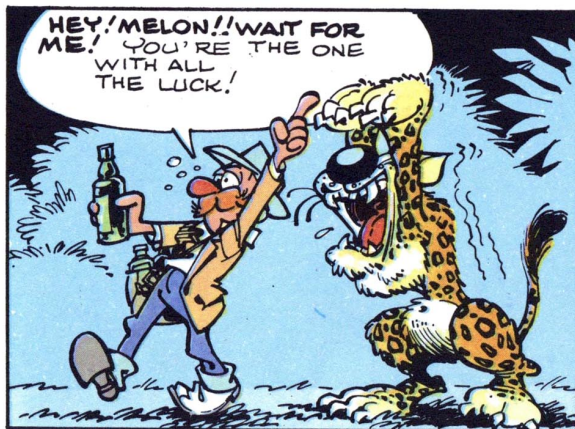
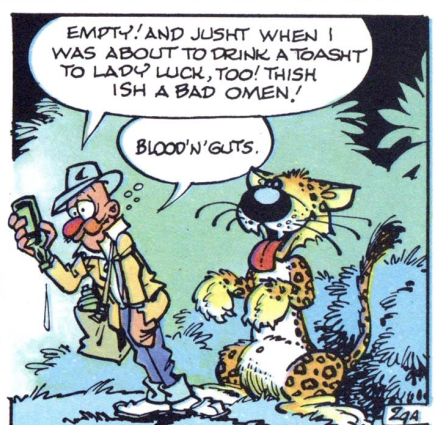
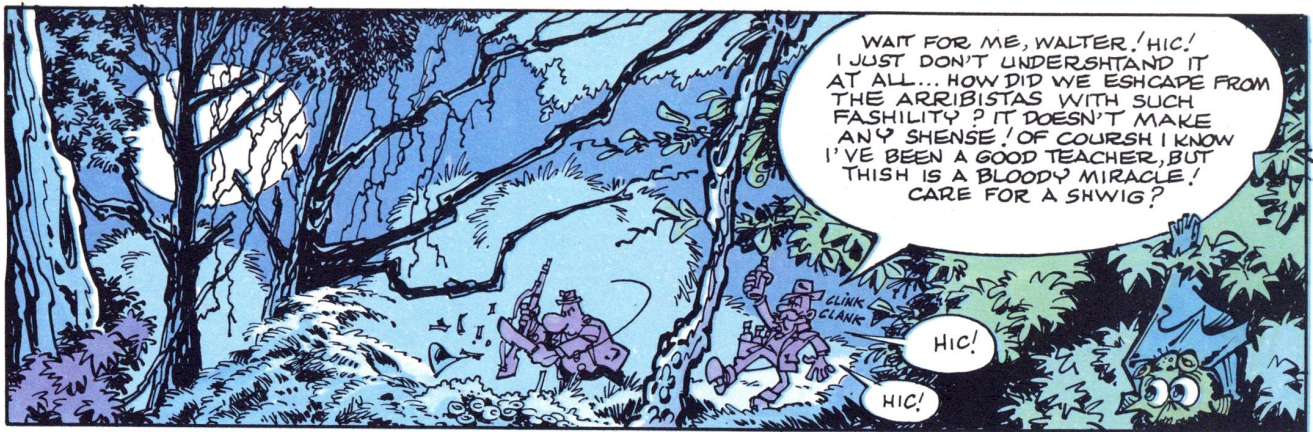


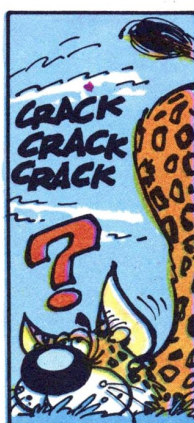
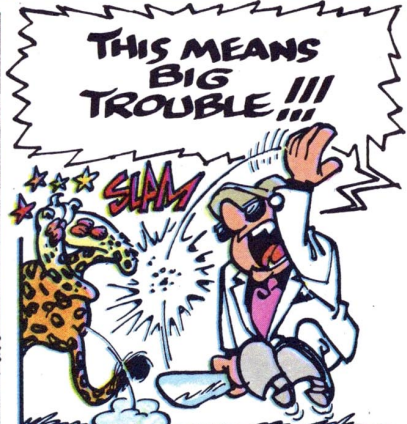
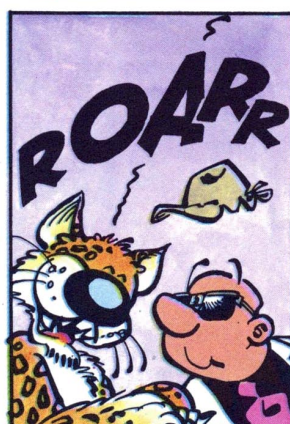
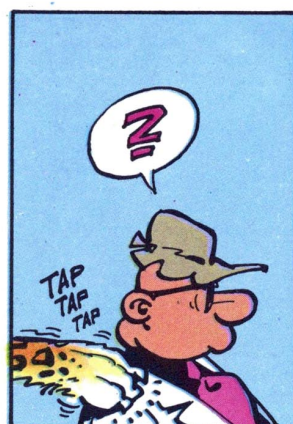
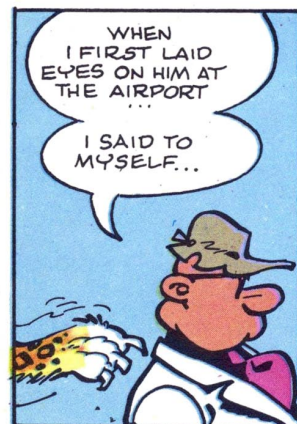
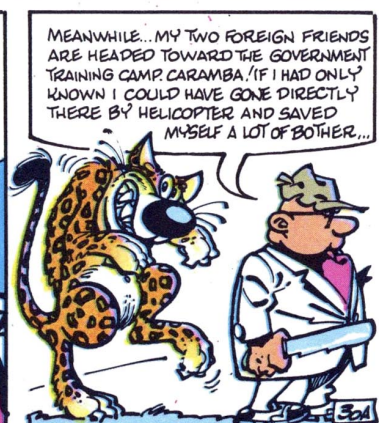
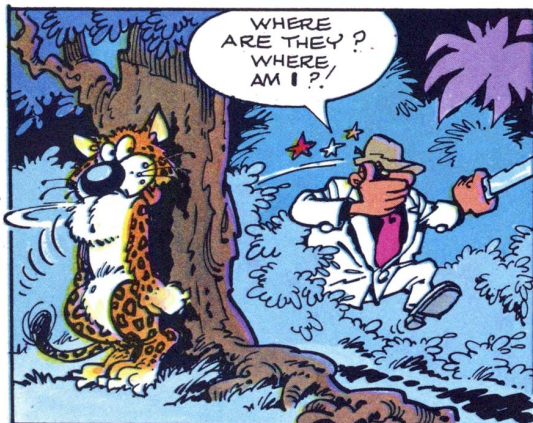


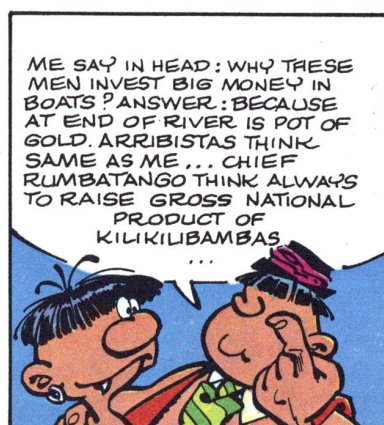
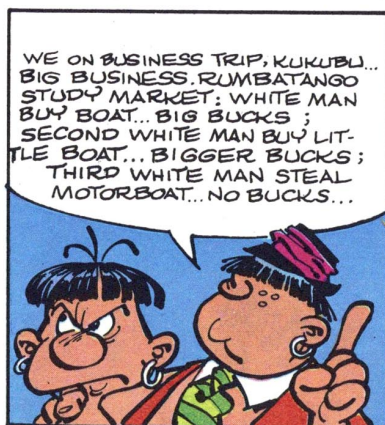
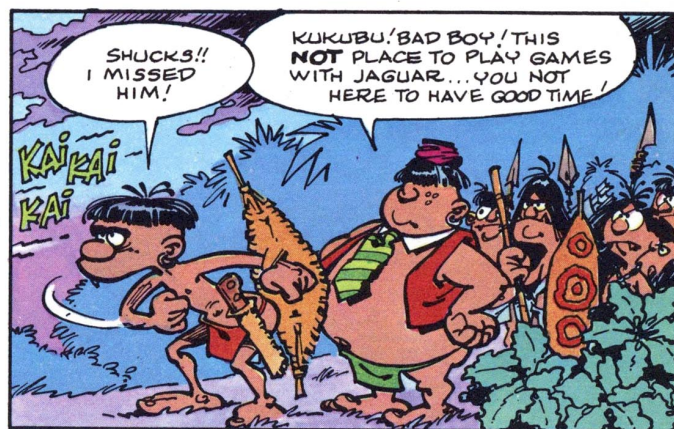
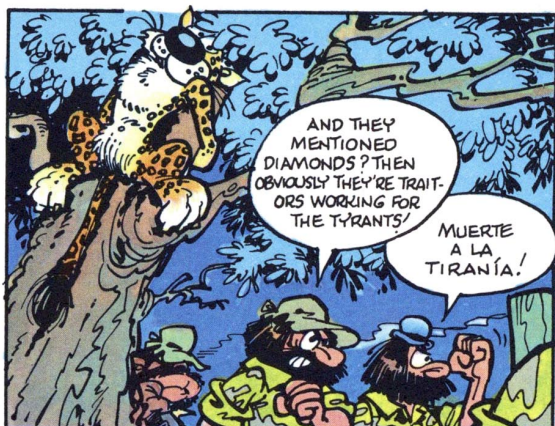


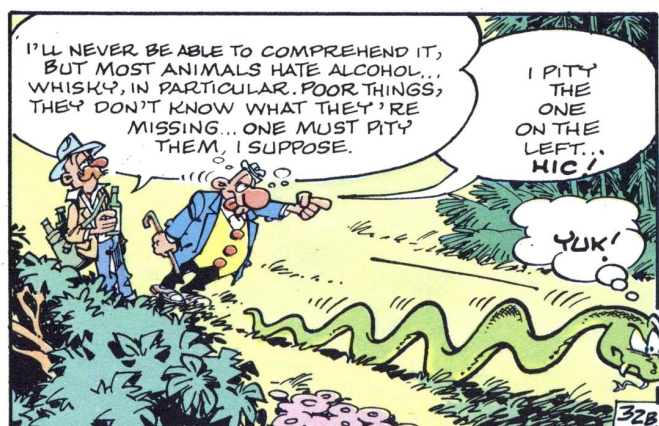
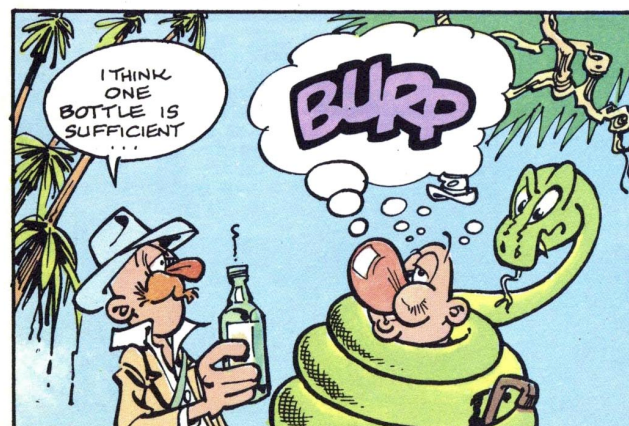
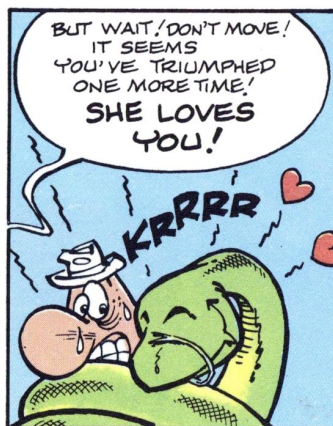
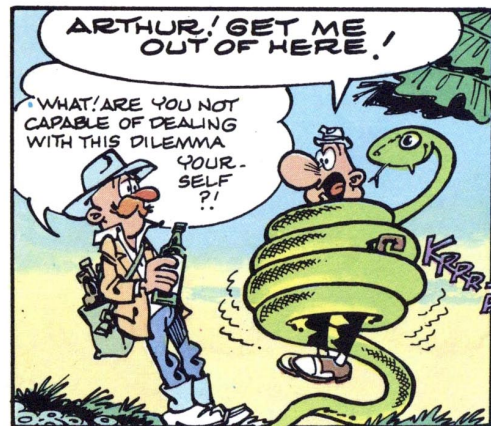
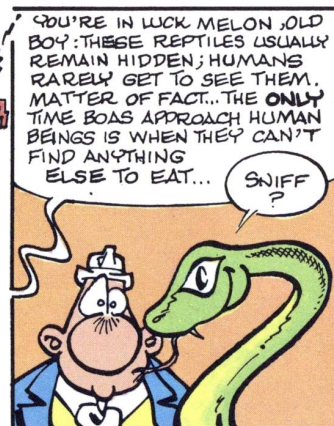
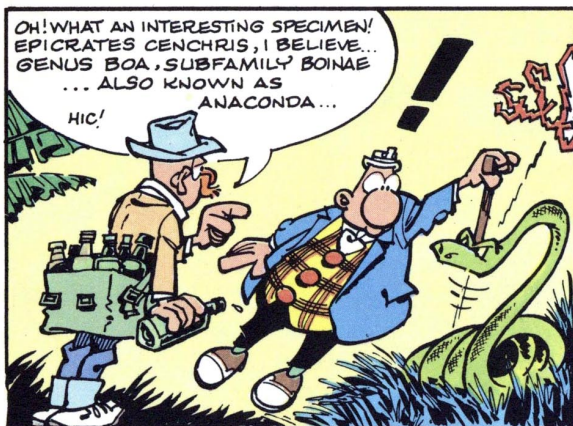
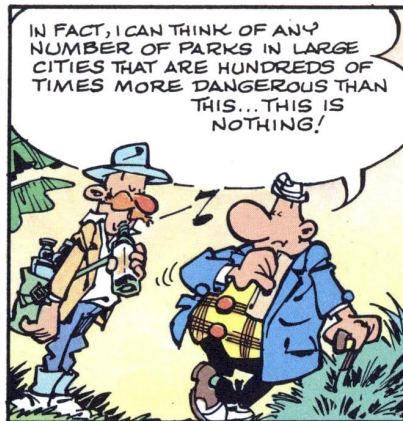
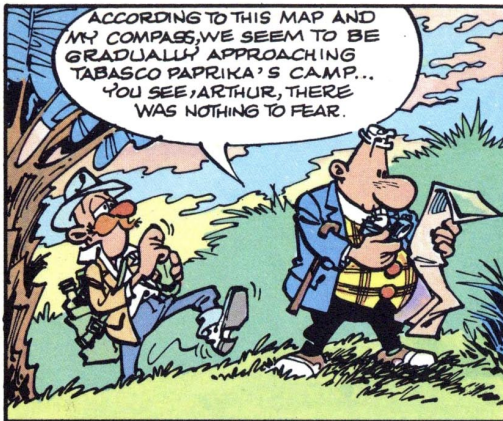


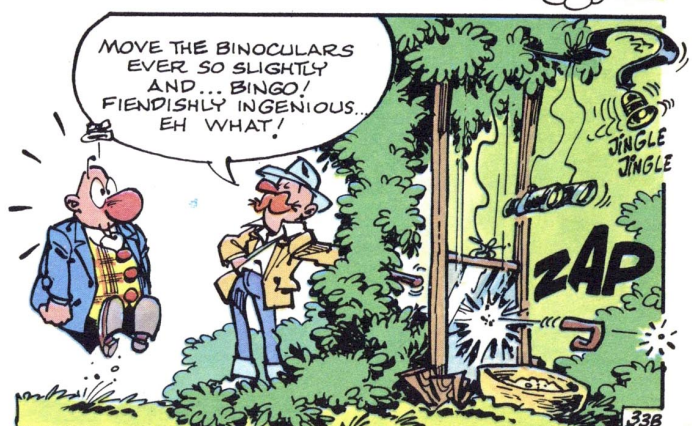
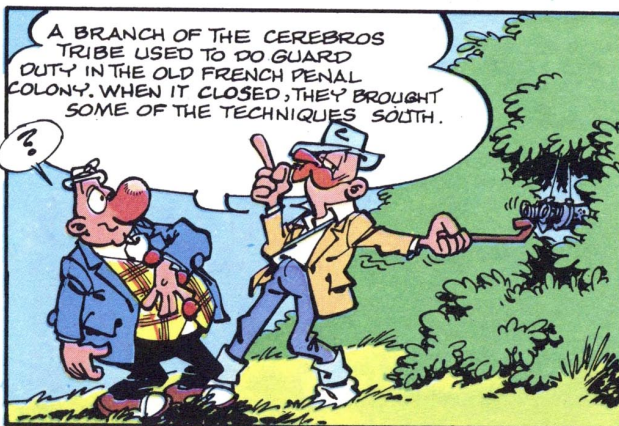
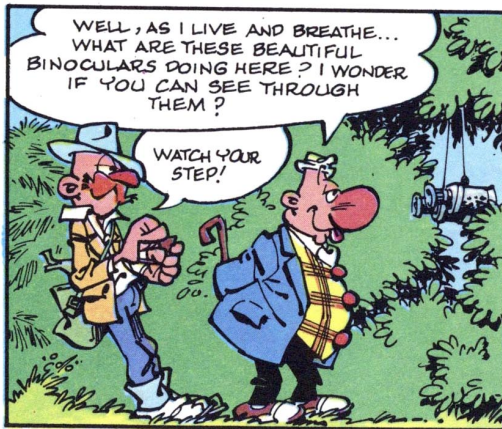
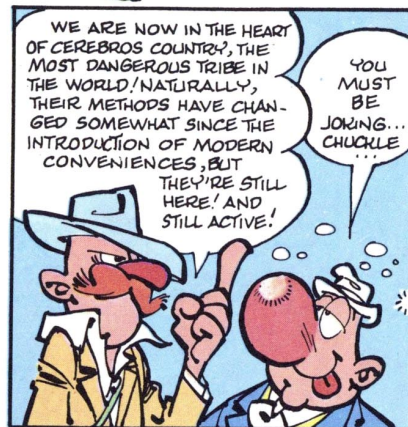
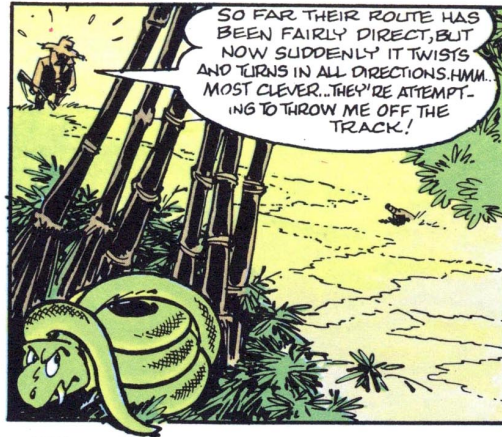


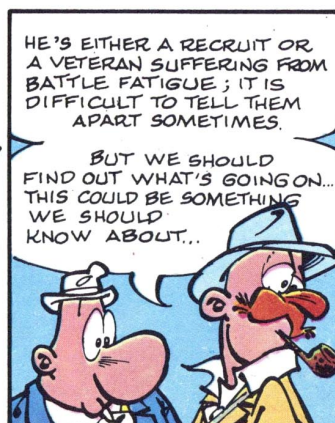
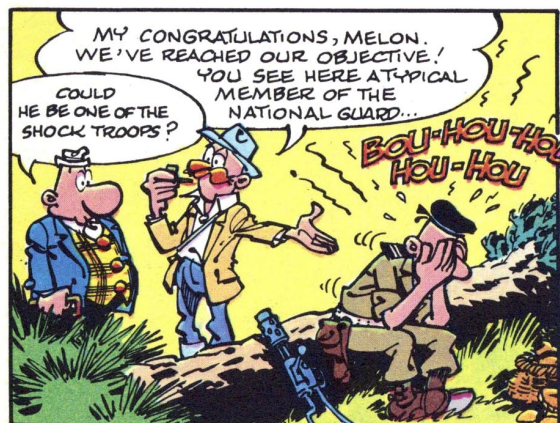
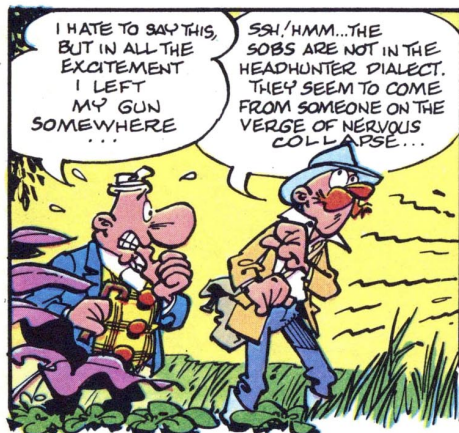
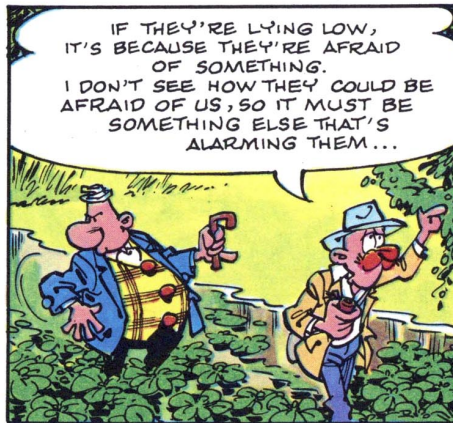
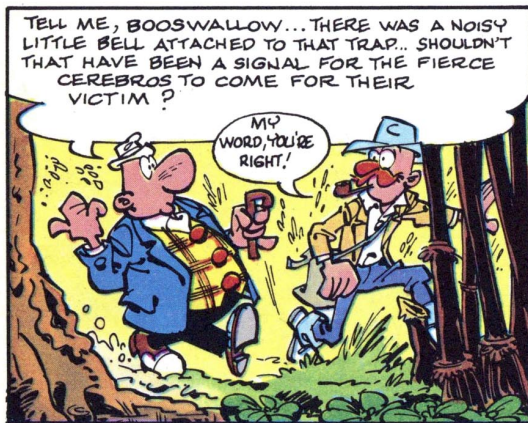
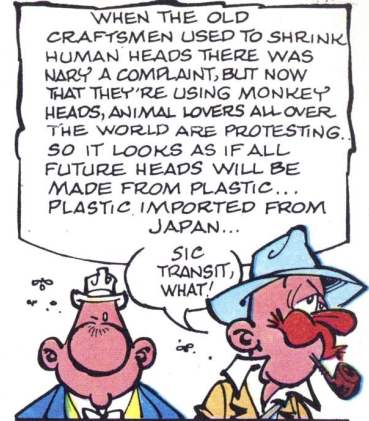
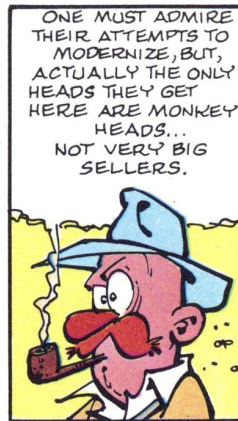
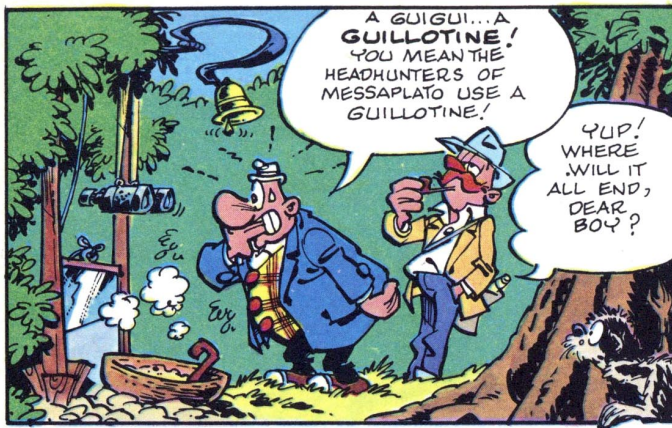


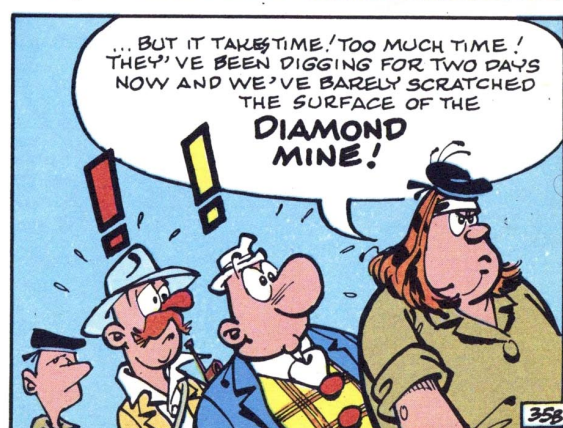
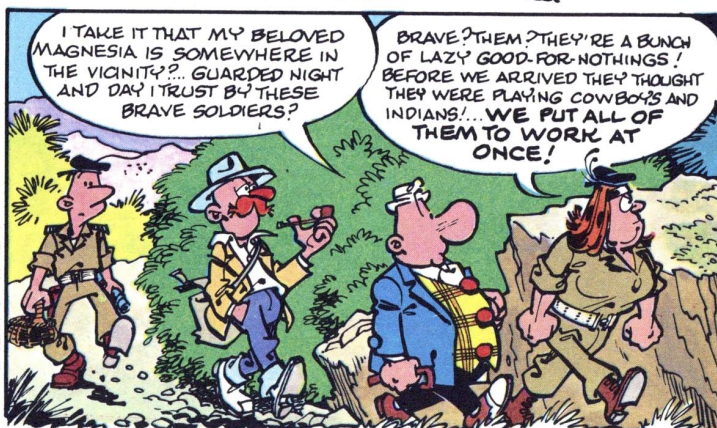
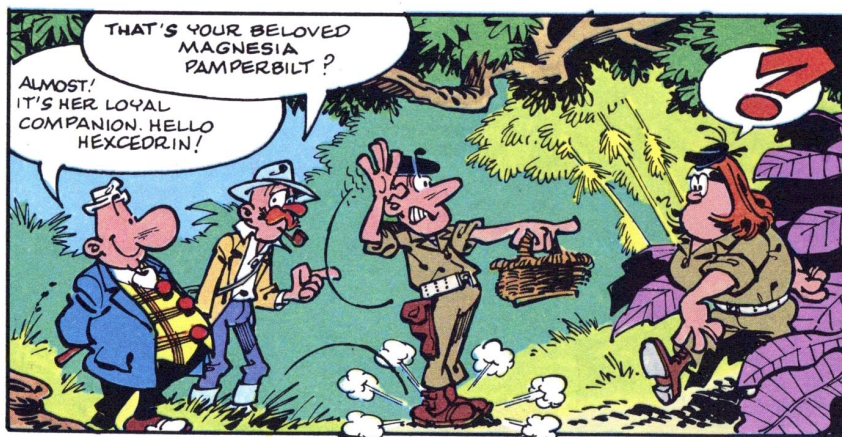
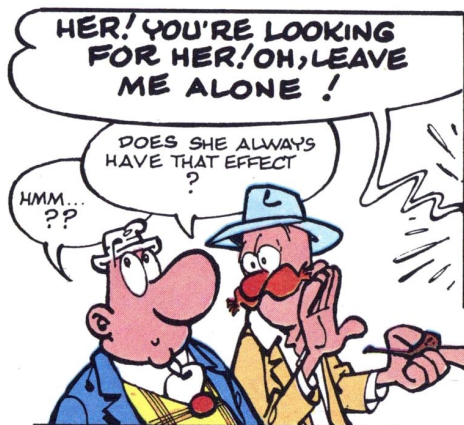


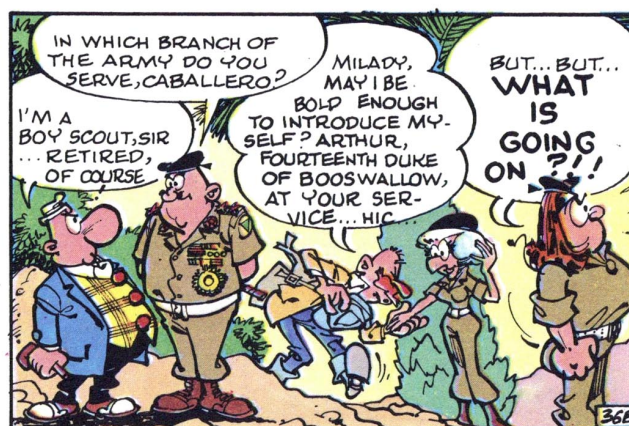
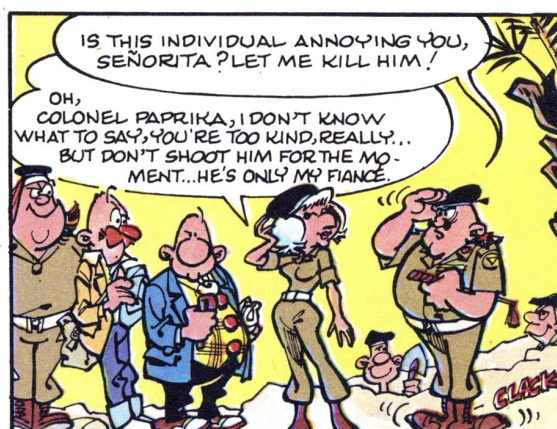
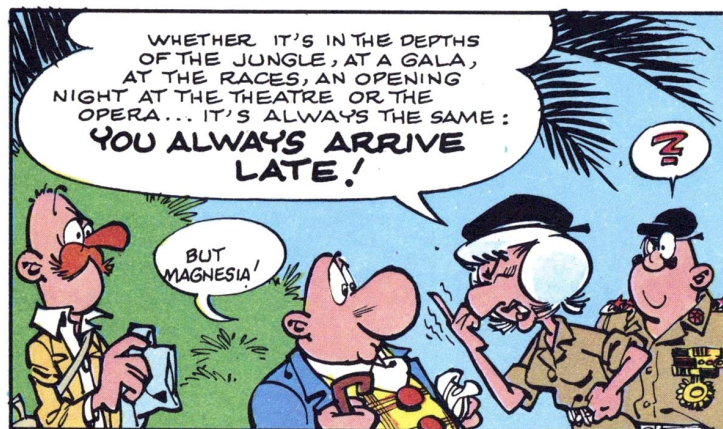
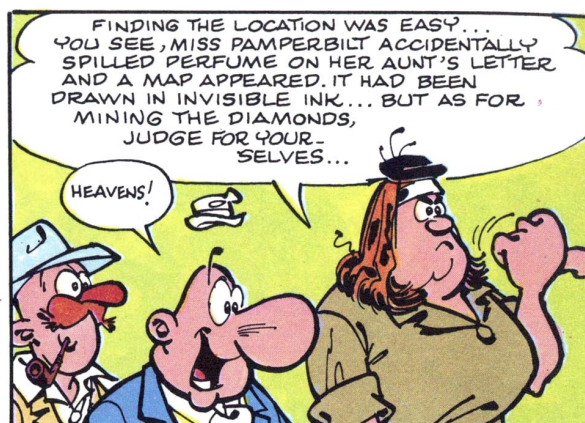


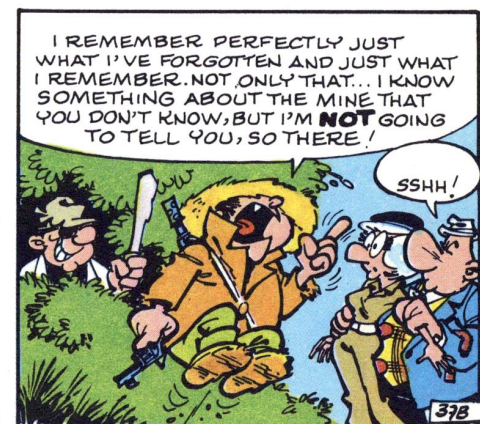
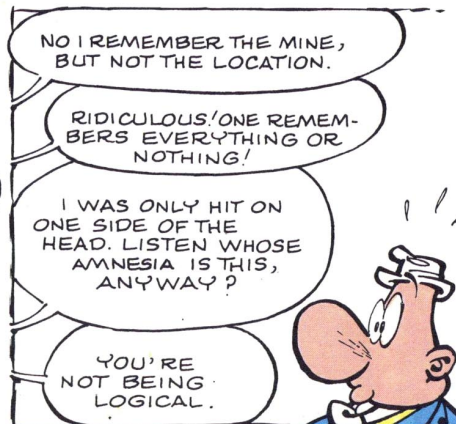
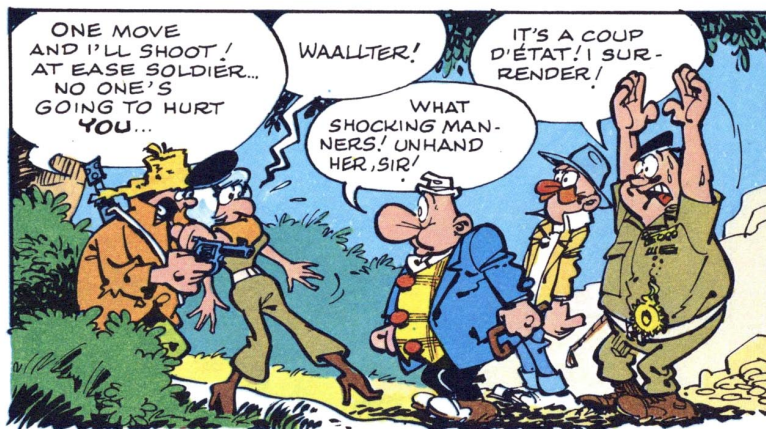
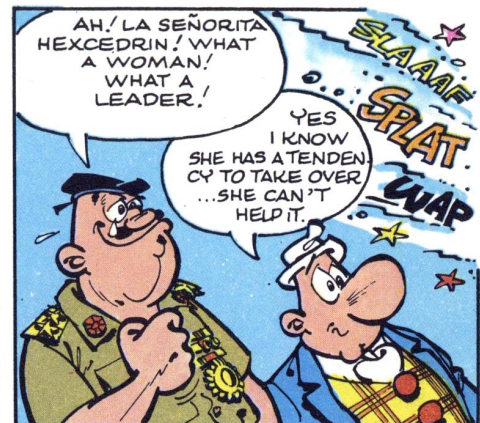


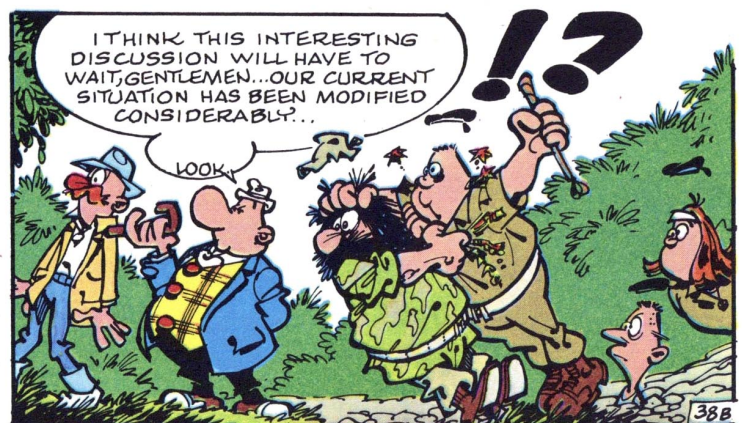
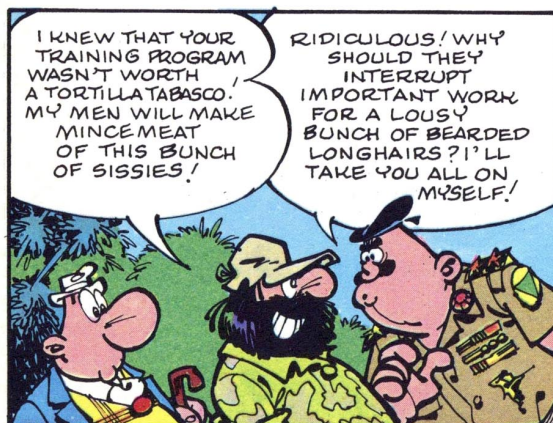
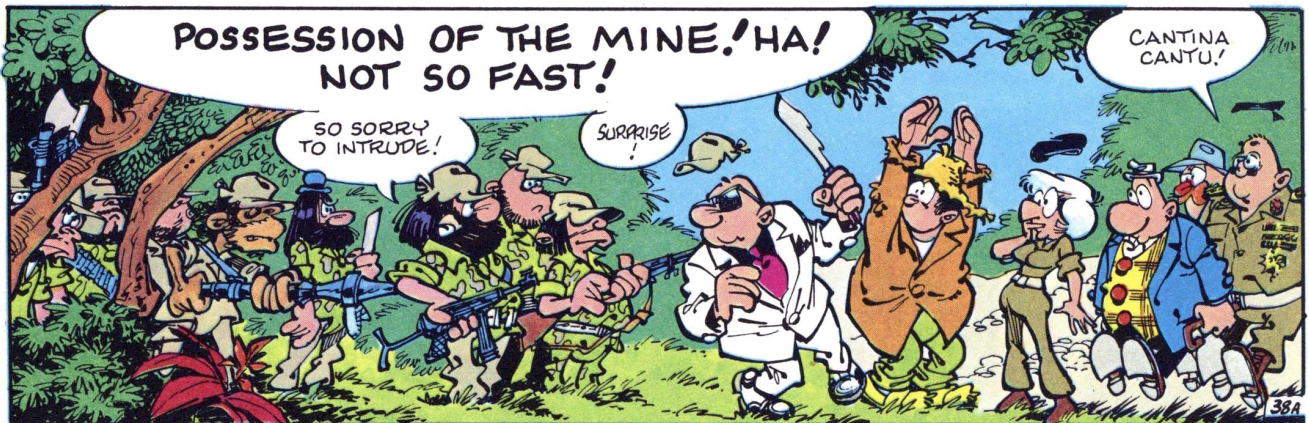
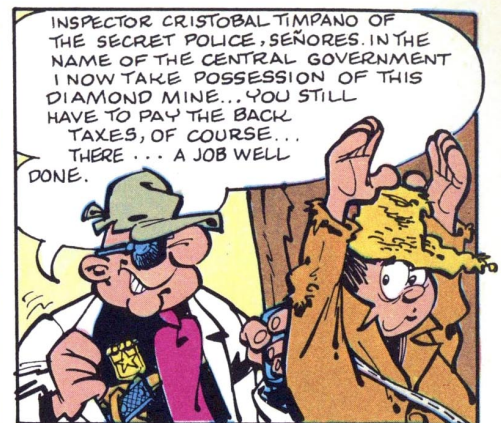
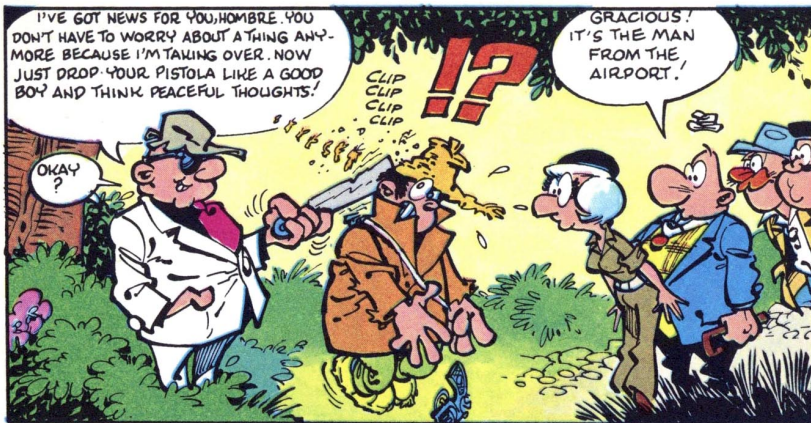


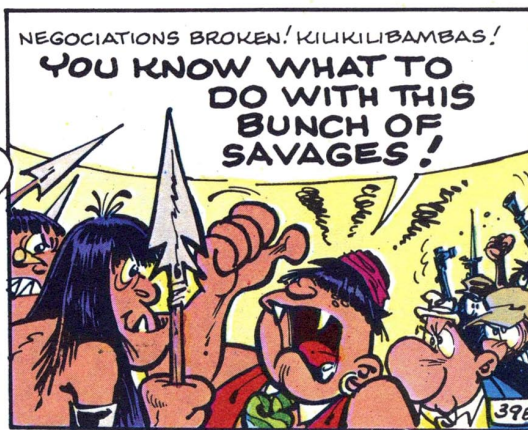
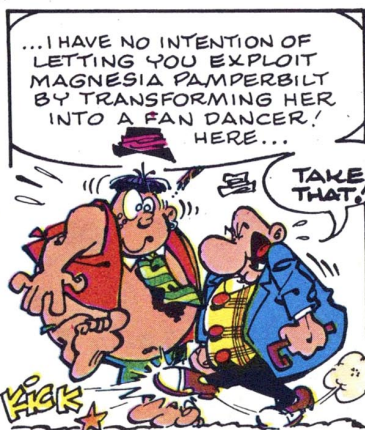
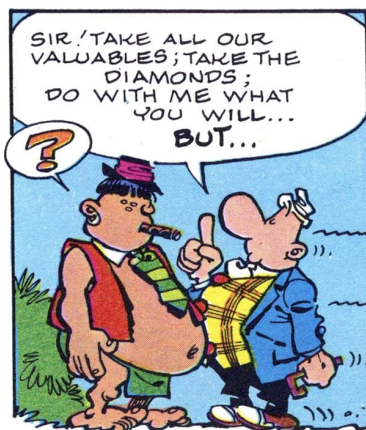
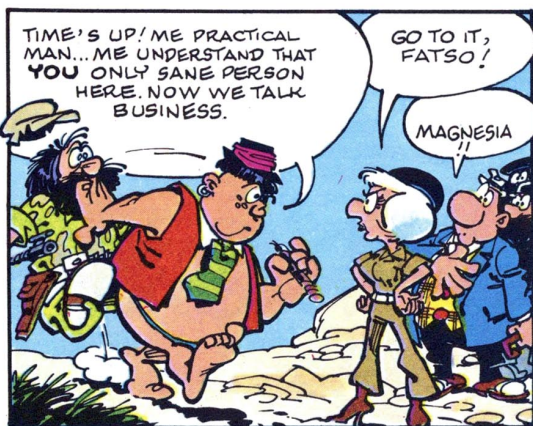
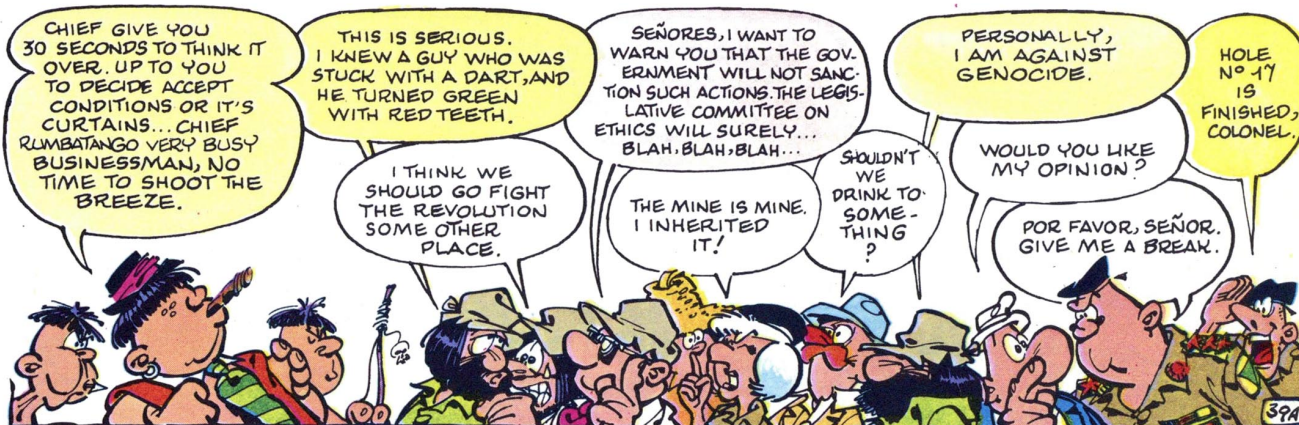
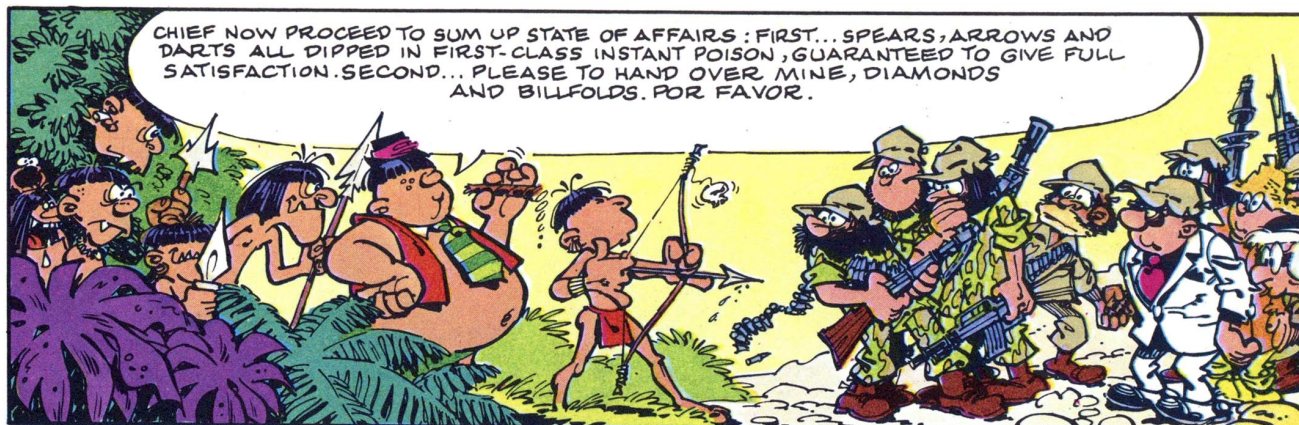


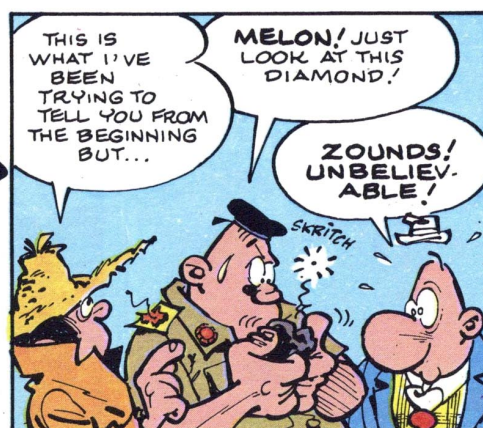
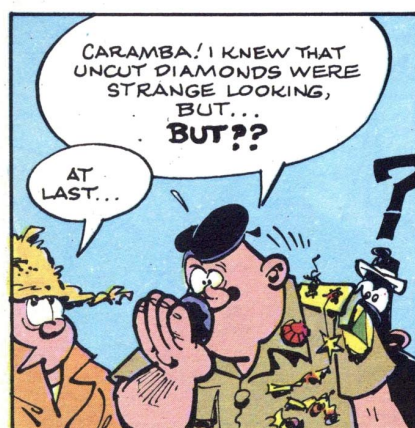
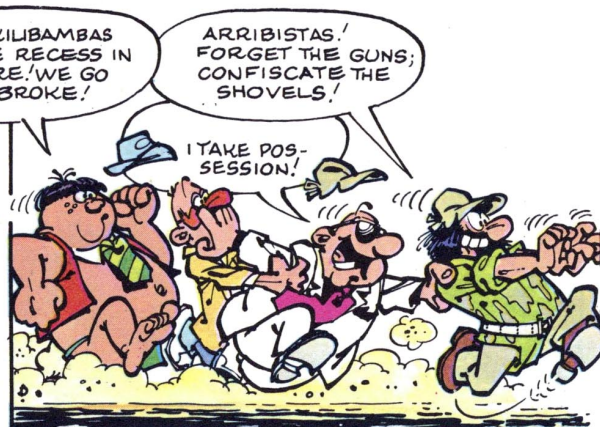
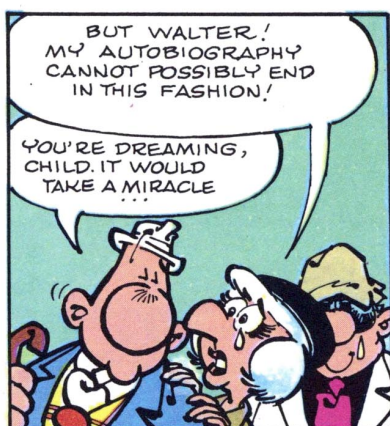
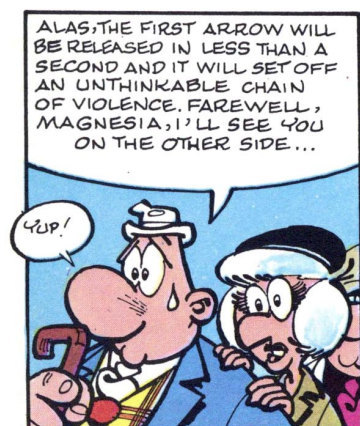
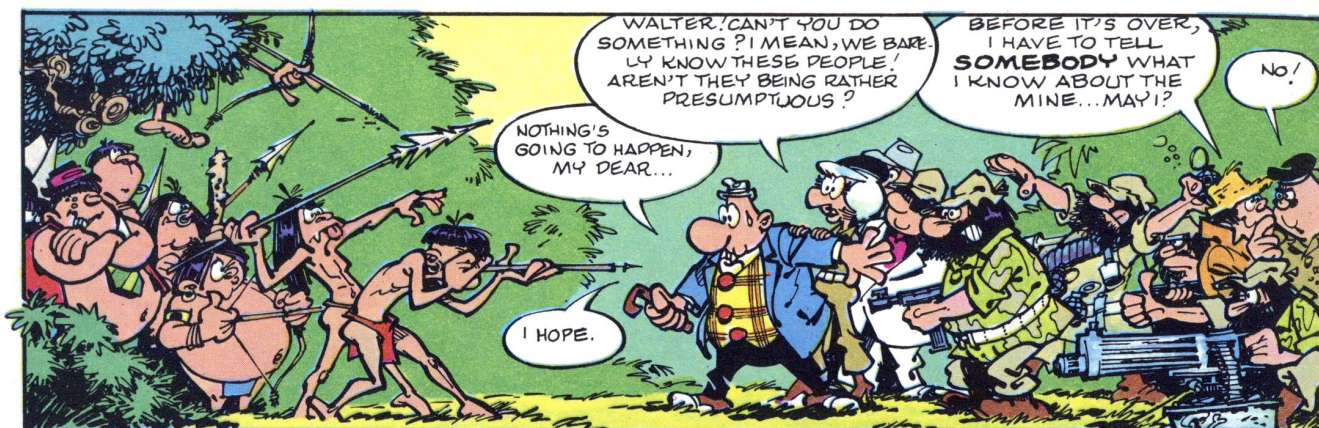


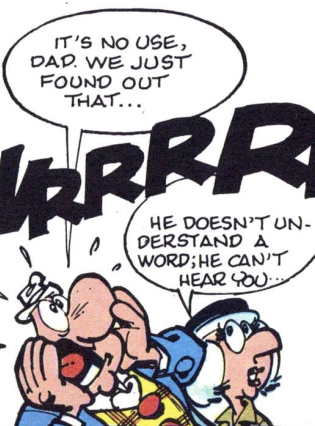
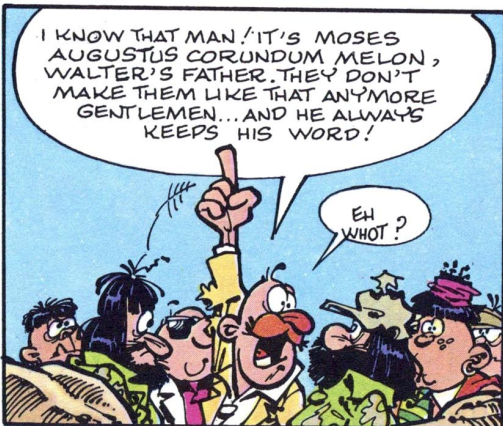
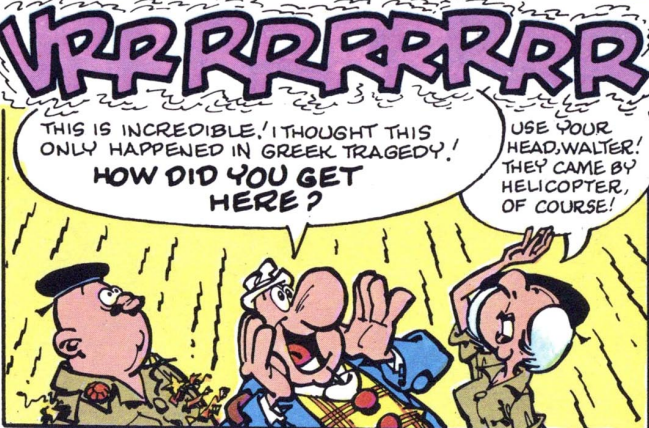
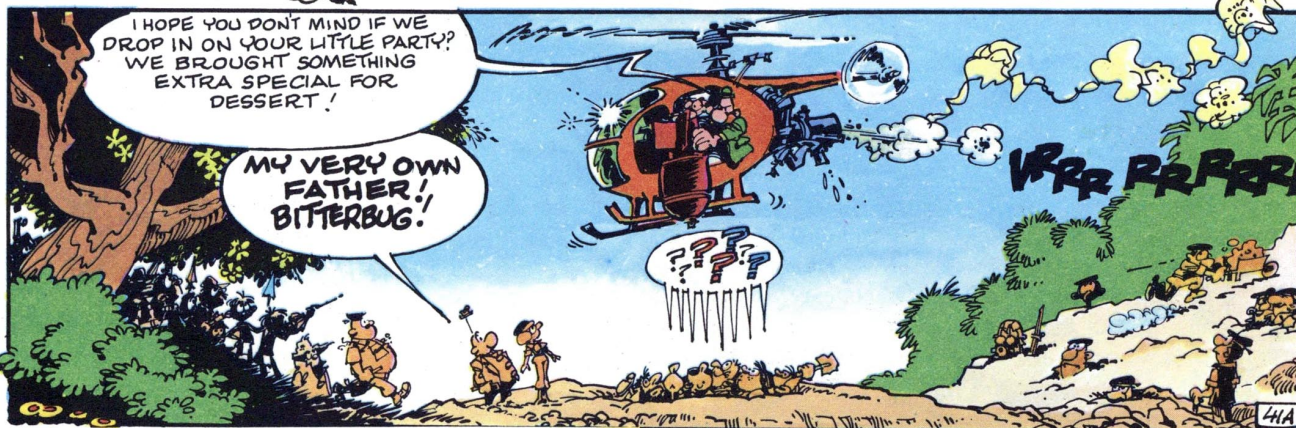
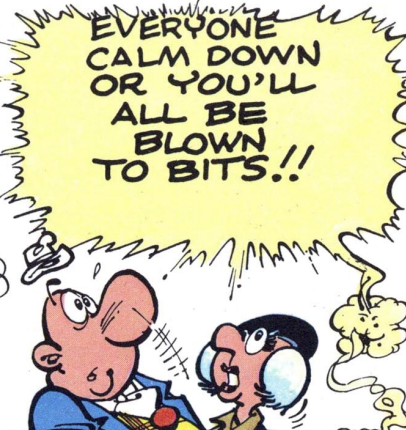
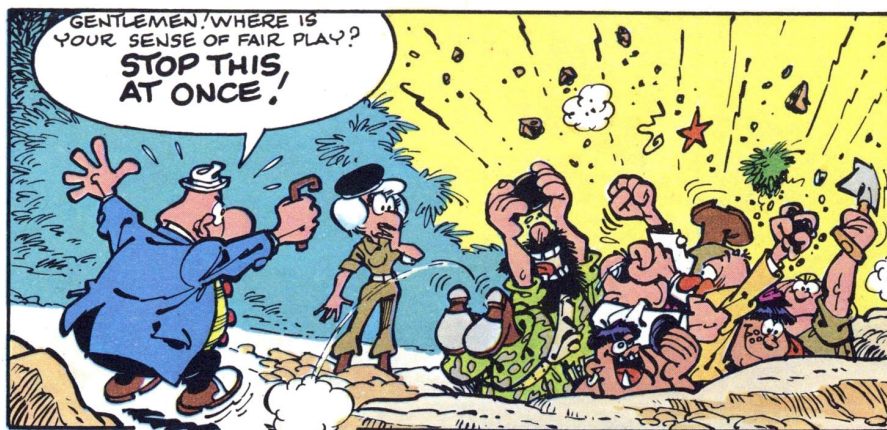


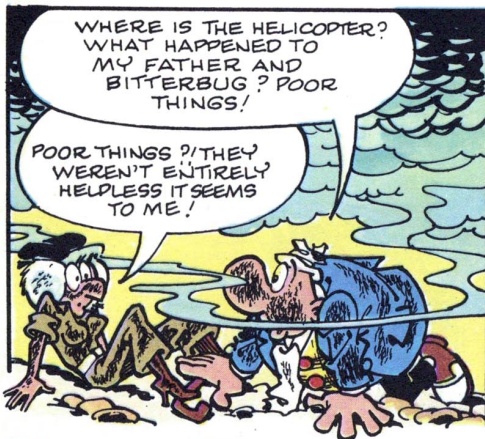
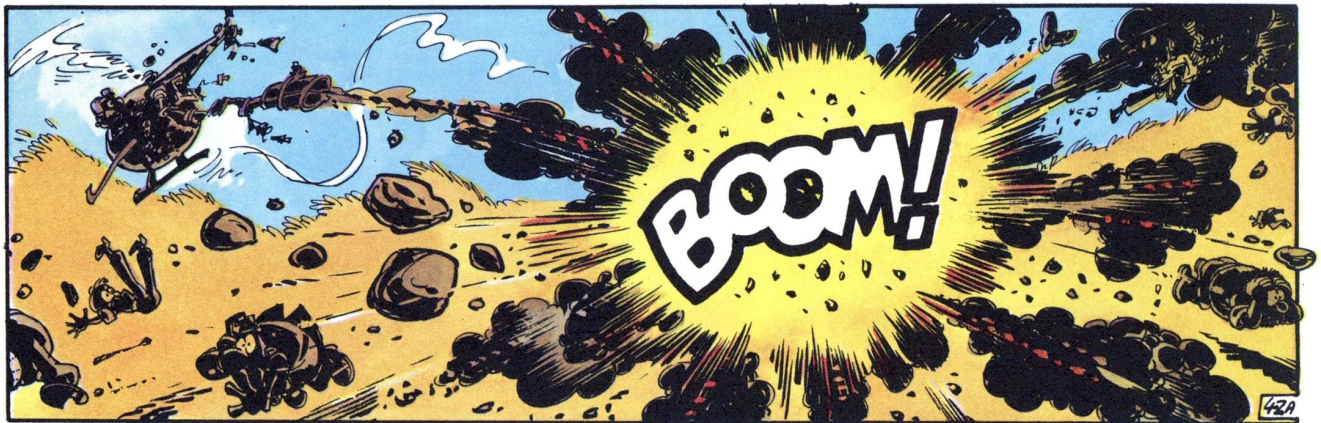
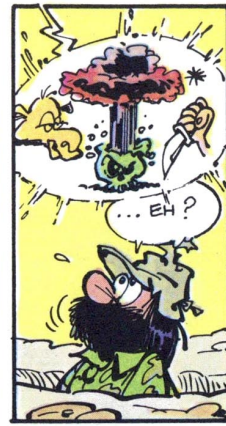
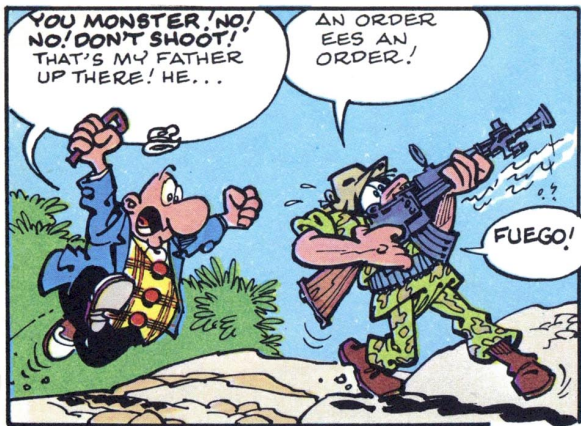


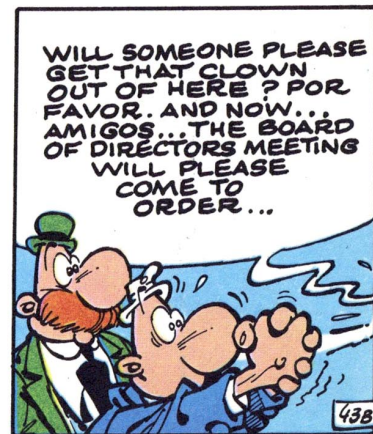
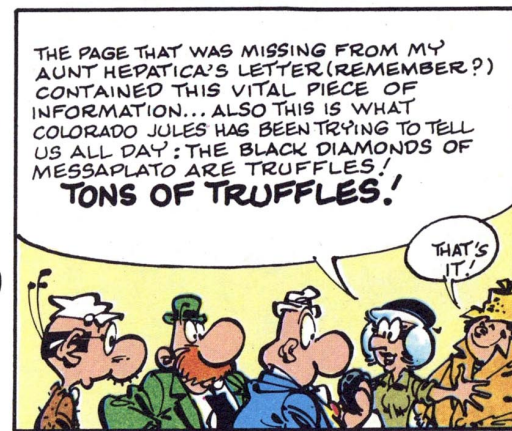
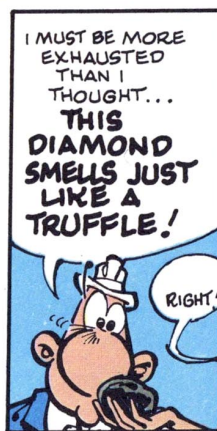
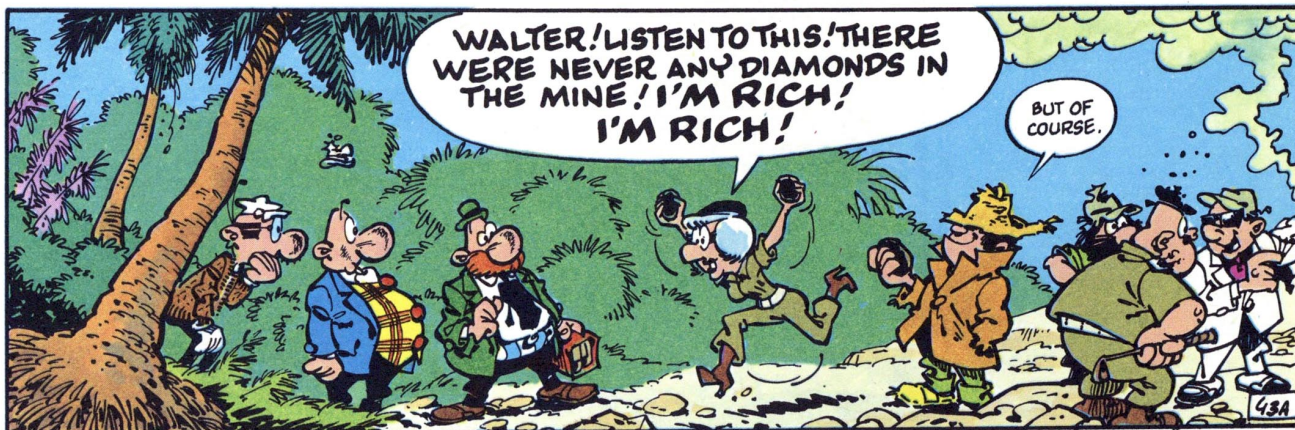
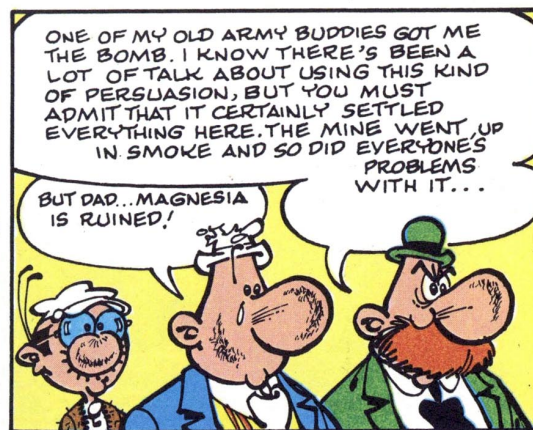
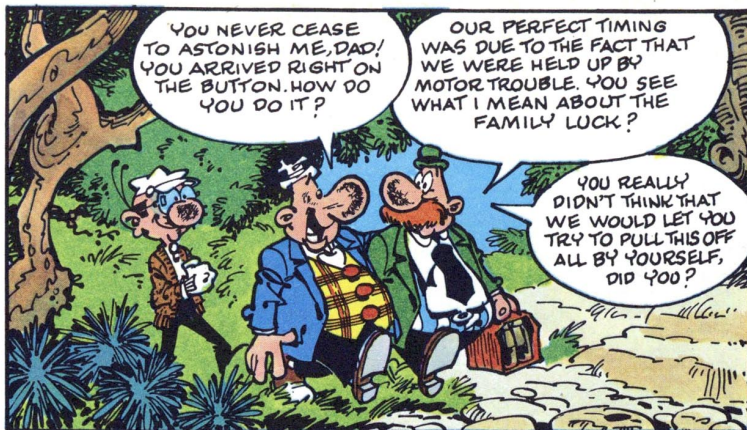












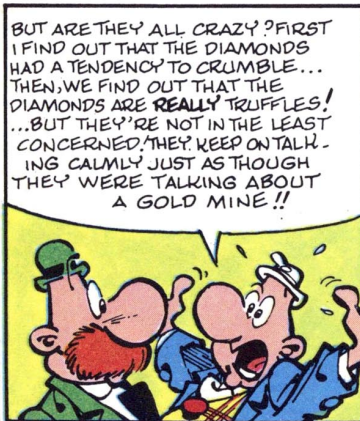
AHEM/SEÑORITA Y SEÑORES... LADY AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CONSOLIDATED TRUFFLE MINE OF MESSAPLATO INTERNATIONAL EXPORT COMPANY, INC., LTD., AND ALL THAT JAZZ... I NOW OFFICIALLY OPEN THE FIRST MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. I PROPOSE... AHEM!... THAT OUR FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS BE A DISCUSSION OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

HOW DO WE SPLIT THE LOOT?



YO VIOLENTLY
SECOND THE
MOTION.

AS PRINCIPAL STOCKHOLDER
FOR TRIBE, ME SAY O.K.



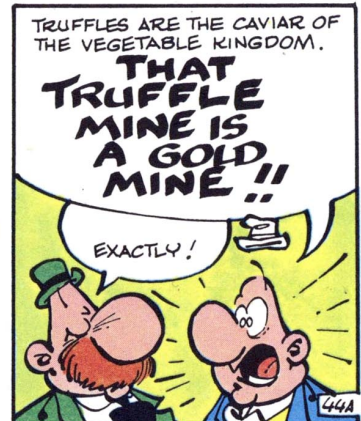
BUT ARE THEY ALL CRAZY? FIRST I FIND OUT THAT THE DIAMONDS HAD A TENDENCY TO CRUMBLE... THEN, WE FIND OUT THAT THE DIAMONDS ARE REALLY TRUFFLES! ...BUT THEY'RE NOT IN THE LEAST CONCERNED, THEY KEEP ON TALKING CALMLY JUST AS THOUGH THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT A GOLD MINE!!



WALTER...?

YES?

DO YOU KNOW
THE PRICE OF
TRUFFLES?



TRUFFLES ARE THE CAVIAR OF
THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM.

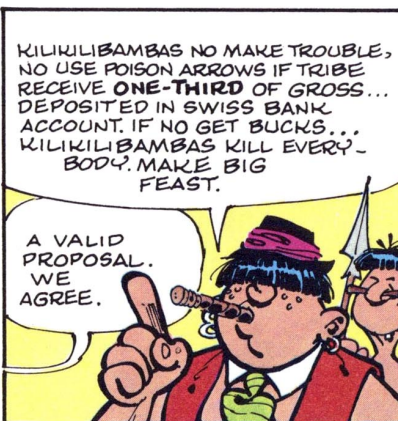
**THAT
TRUFFLE
MINE IS
A GOLD
MINE !!**

EXACTLY!



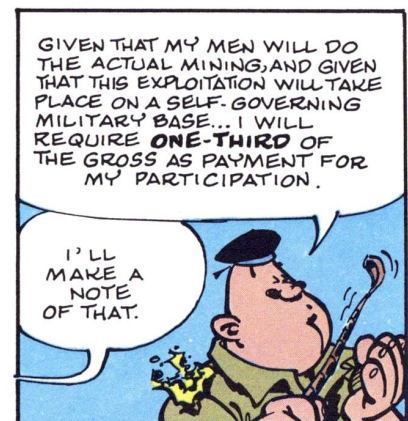
AGREED. THE ARRIBISTAS CONTROL ALL ACCESS TO THE D.T.Z. : THE DEMILITARIZED TRUFFLE ZONE. ALL TRANSPORTATION ENTERING OR LEAVING THE ZONE WILL PAY A TOLL AMOUNTING TO **ONE-THIRD** OF THE GROSS.

THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS
THE ABOVE PROPOSITION.



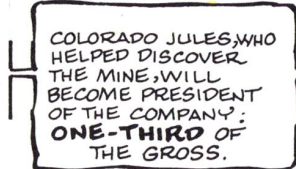
KILIKILIBAMBAS NO MAKE TROUBLE, NO USE POISON ARROWS IF TRIBE RECEIVE **ONE-THIRD** OF GROSS... DEPOSITED IN SWISS BANK ACCOUNT. IF NO GET BUCKS... KILIKILIBAMBAS KILL EVERY BODY. MAKE BIG FEAST.

A VALID PROPOSAL.
WE AGREE.

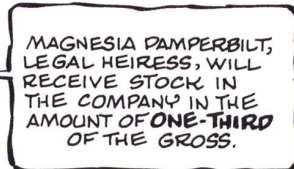


GIVEN THAT MY MEN WILL DO THE ACTUAL MINING, AND GIVEN THAT THIS EXPLOITATION WILL TAKE PLACE ON A SELF-GOVERNING MILITARY BASE... I WILL REQUIRE **ONE-THIRD** OF THE GROSS AS PAYMENT FOR MY PARTICIPATION.

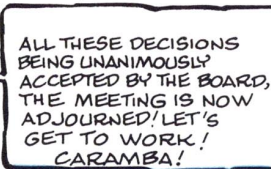
I'LL MAKE A
NOTE
OF THAT.



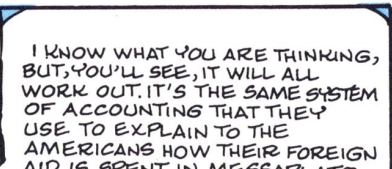
COLORADO JULES, WHO HELPED DISCOVER THE MINE, WILL BECOME PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY: **ONE-THIRD** OF THE GROSS.



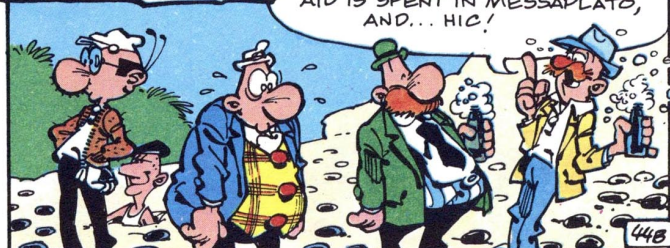
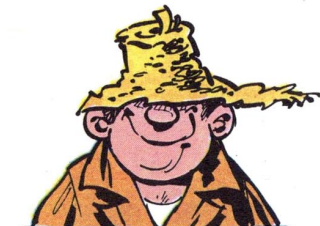
MAGNESIA DAMPERBILT, LEGAL HEIRESS, WILL RECEIVE STOCK IN THE COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF **ONE-THIRD** OF THE GROSS.

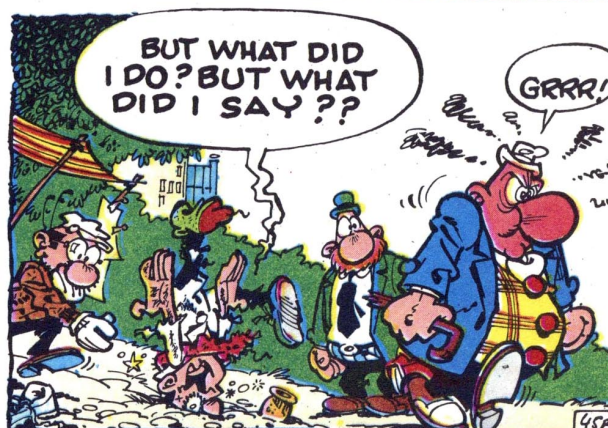
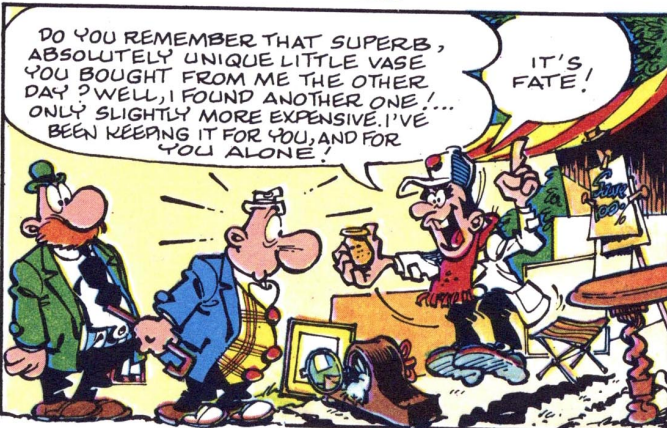
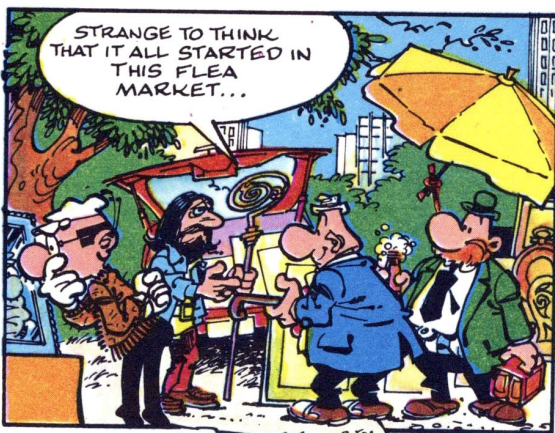
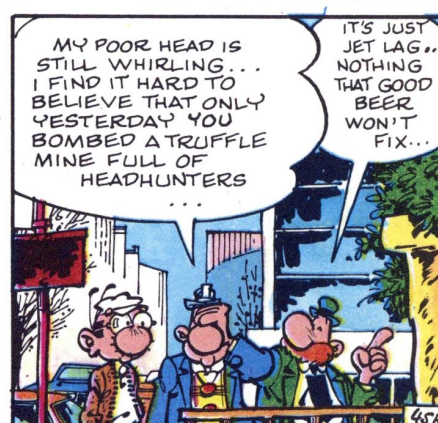
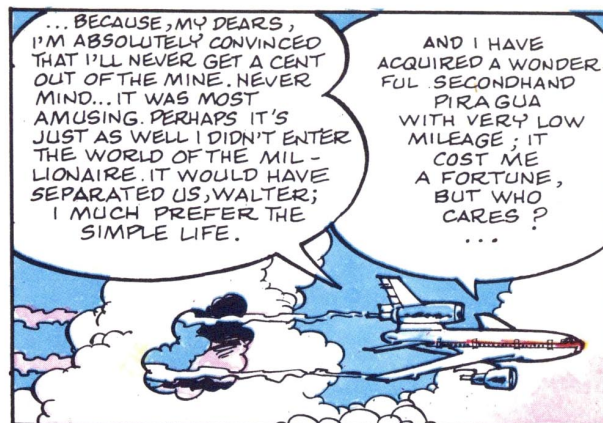
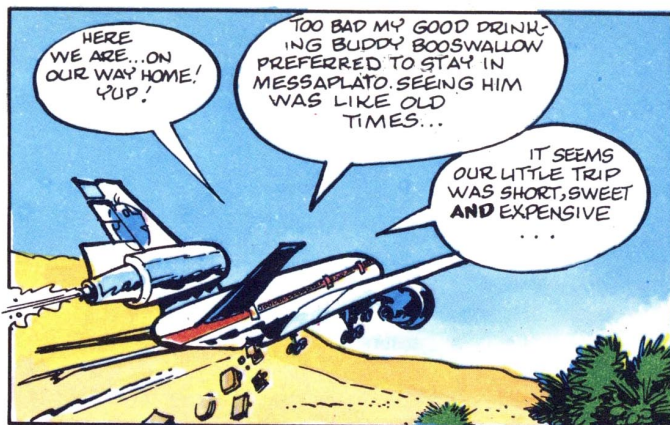


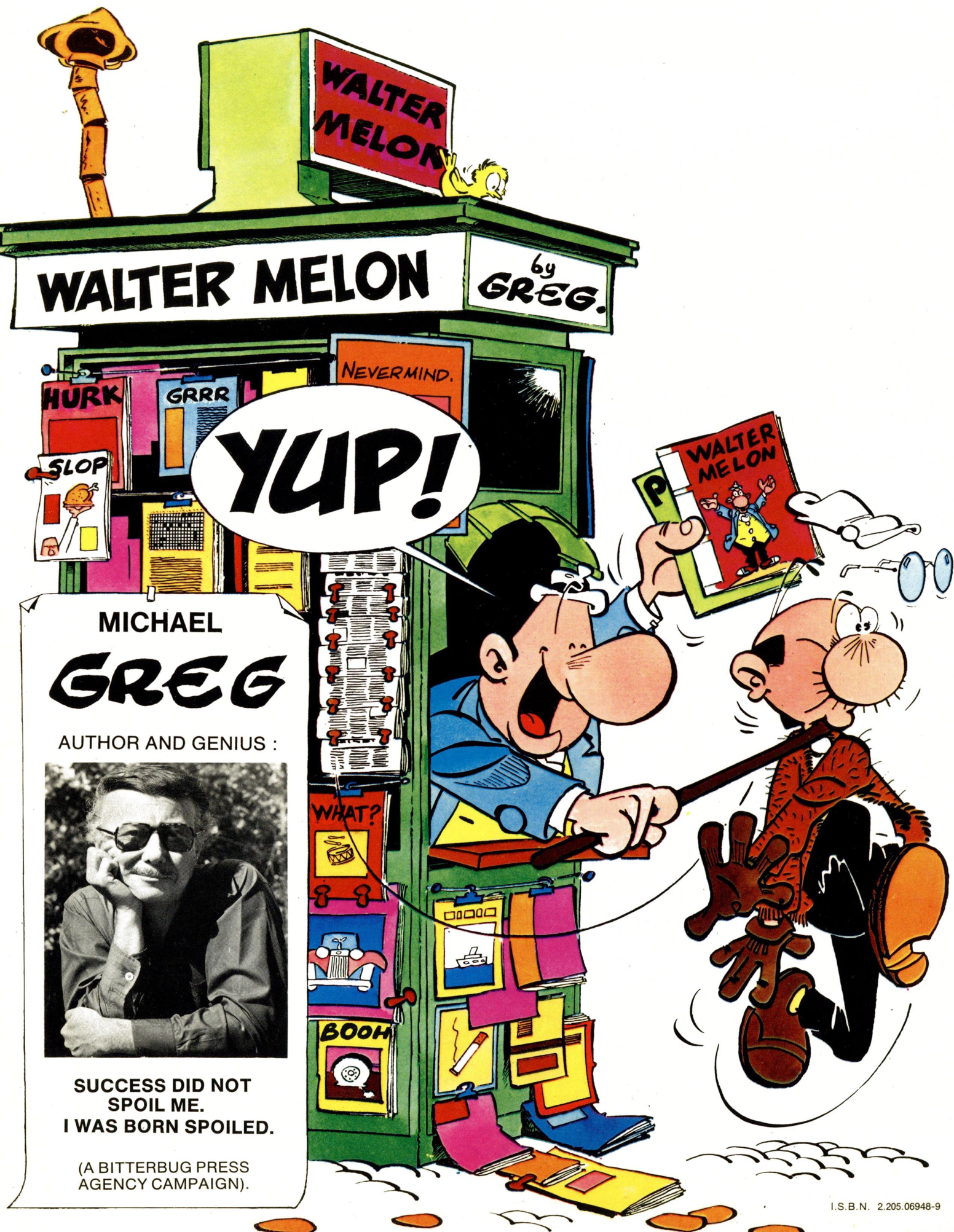
ALL THESE DECISIONS BEING UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED BY THE BOARD, THE MEETING IS NOW ADJOURNED! LET'S GET TO WORK! CARAMBA!



I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE THINKING, BUT, YOU'LL SEE, IT WILL ALL WORK OUT. IT'S THE SAME SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTING THAT THEY USE TO EXPLAIN TO THE AMERICANS HOW THEIR FOREIGN AID IS SPENT IN MESSAPLATO, AND... HIC!







WALTER MELON

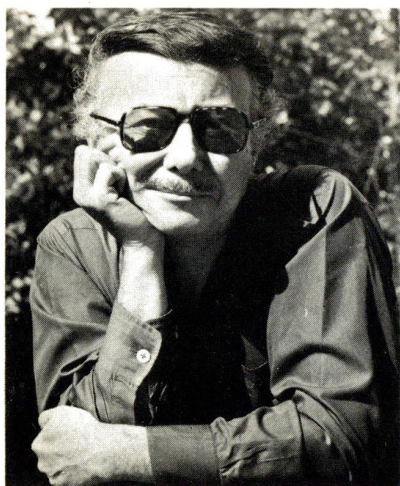
by
GREG.

YUP!

MICHAEL

GREG

AUTHOR AND GENIUS :



**SUCCESS DID NOT
SPOIL ME.
I WAS BORN SPOILED.**

(A BITTERBUG PRESS
AGENCY CAMPAIGN).